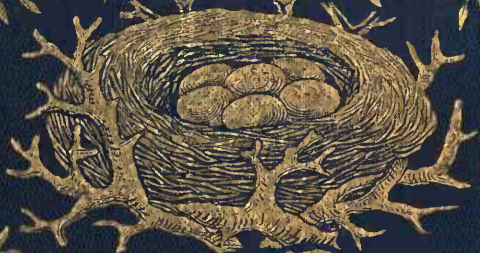


NESTS & EGGS
OF

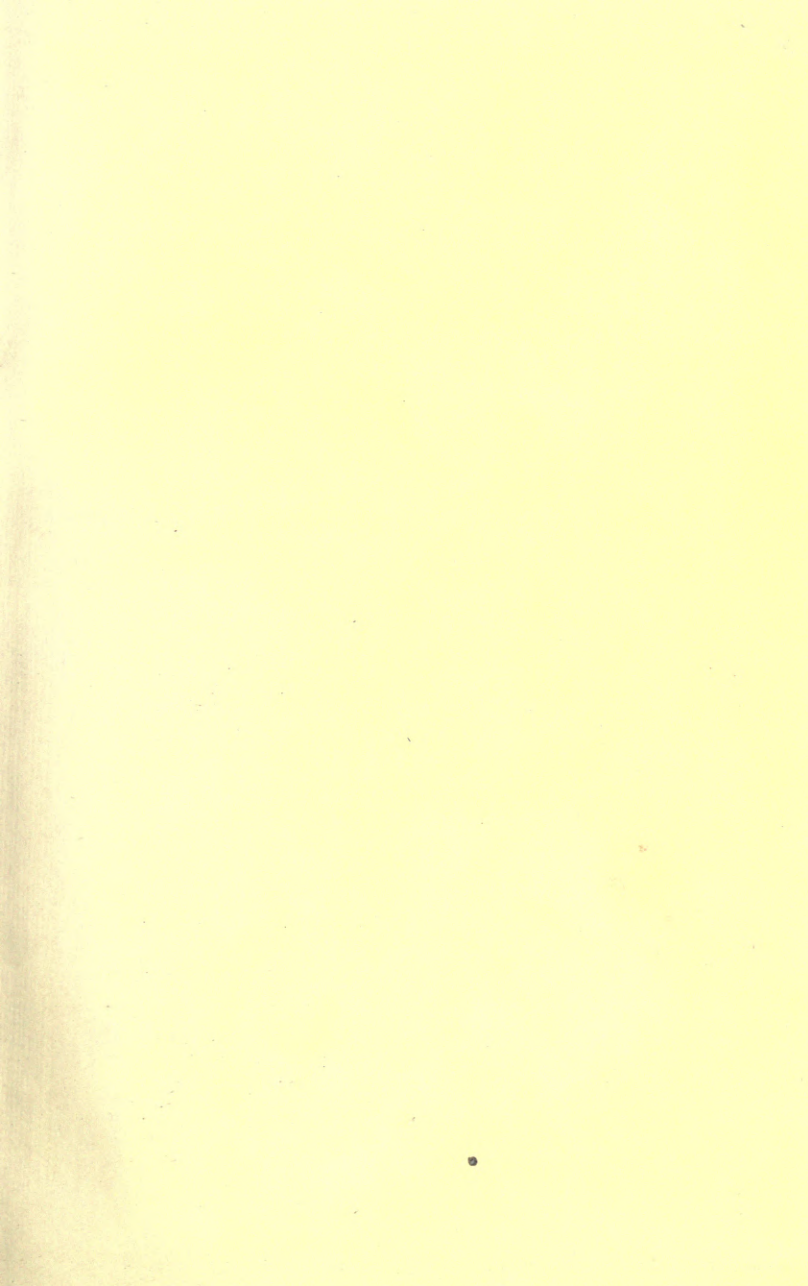


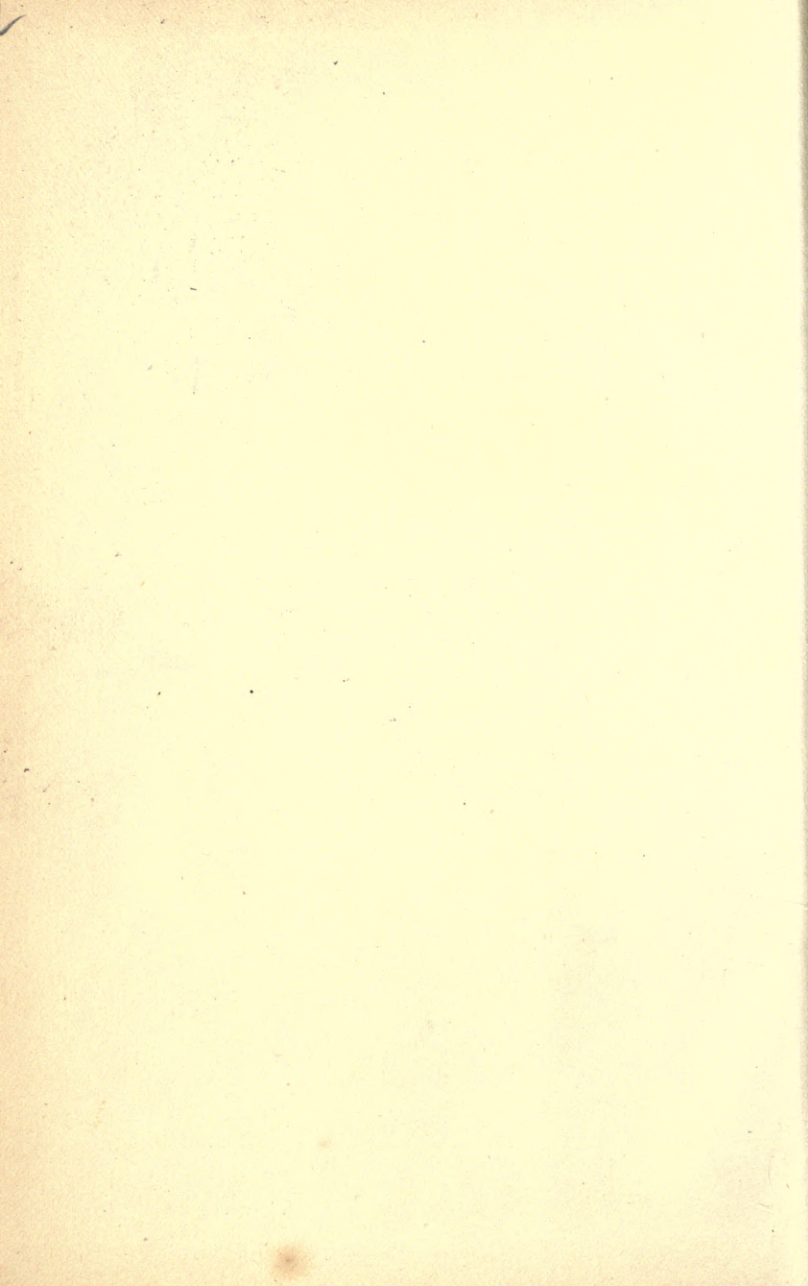
FAMILIAR BIRDS

H. G. ADAMS

Colour Plates
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NESTS AND EGGS

OF

FAMILIAR BIRDS.

BY

H. G. ADAMS.

AUTHOR OF "BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLIES," "SONG BIRDS," ETC., ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

WITH

SIXTEEN COLOURED PLATES.

LONDON:

GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS.

1890.

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NESTS AND EGGS

OF

FAMILIAR BIRDS.

TO MY YOUNG READERS!

You must not be frightened by two or three hard names which I am about to place before you; they are scientific terms, which are frequently used in connection with the subject of this little book, and which therefore ought to be understood by all who take pleasure in the study of that particular branch of Natural History, termed

OOLOGY.

That's a queer word, is it not? It looks like a word without a head, and so it is; the Z is gone, which would make it *Zoology*; this last word means, properly, the Science of Animals, teaching their nature, properties, classification, etc.; so that it is but another term for Natural History. It comes from two Greek words, about which I need not trouble you now. *O-ol-o-gy*—that's the way it's pronounced—signifies the science of eggs; it also comes from the Greek, as does *Oolite*,

of which I shall have to say something when I come to write, for your instruction, a book about another *ology*, which has a *Ge* before it.

INCUBATION.

Such of you as have seen the *Patent Incubator*, a machine like an oven, by which eggs are *hatched* in large numbers without the help of the parent birds, will readily understand the meaning of this term—*In-cu-ba-tion*: it is derived from the Latin *incubatio*, to lie or sit upon. People who eat too much indigestible food have frightful dreams, in which they fancy some ugly monster is sitting and pressing upon their chest, so as almost to prevent them breathing, and this is called an *Incubus*, a thing that sits *hard* and *close*, as a bird does upon her eggs.

NIDIFICATION


you will find explained further on, as I do not wish to give you too much to remember at once. And now let me say a few words about that beautiful structure, a Bird's Nest, and beg of you never to take or destroy one idly and wantonly, that is, without there is some really useful end in view. For a mere momentary gratification, you have no right to render useless the labour of a little bird, and to inflict pain and sorrow on a creature so calculated to please your eye with its beauty, and delight your ear with its melodious song. If you are really a student of Natural History, and

desire to form a collection of Nests and Eggs, I would say nothing against your taking as many specimens of both as may be *necessary* for your purpose; or if there is some sufficiently strong and good reason why the work of a feathered architect, with its interesting contents, should be destroyed, let it be done as quickly, and with as little suffering to the young or parent birds, as may be. When eggs only are required for a cabinet, if but one or two are taken from a nest, they will not be missed by the sitting bird. Always remember that *the eye of the Great Creator is upon you*, and that He will call you to account for every act of unnecessary cruelty.

Thus much have I thought it necessary to say about “bird’s-nesting”—a practice to which boys, especially idle and mischievous ones, are too much addicted. The following lines by Hurdis, on a Bird’s Nest, should be read carefully and thoughtfully by all such, and they would perhaps be induced to refrain from destroying so wonderful a piece of Nature’s architecture:—

“But most of all it wins my admiration,
To view the structure of this little work,
A Bird’s Nest. Mark it well, within, without;
No tool had he that wrought, no knife to cut,
No nail to fix, no bodkin to insert,
No glue to join: his little beak was all,
And yet how neatly finished. What nice hand,
With every implement and means of art,
And twenty years’ experience to boot,
Could make me such another? Fondly then
We boast of excellence, whose noblest skill
Instinctive genius foils.”

WHAT IS AN EGG?

T may at first strike our young readers that this is a question very easily answered; if they think so, let them try what sort of an answer they can give to it, and if they break down in the definition, we will endeavour to help them, as we are told in the old fable Jupiter did the waggoner; but it is best for young people to *try*, and, for that matter, old people too; let them never believe that they *can't* do a thing—"where there's a will there's a way." Many a boy that will take a deal of pains, and incur no inconsiderable risk of life and limb, to climb up a tree after a bird's nest, finds it too much trouble to read and learn about the habits of the creature he is thus ready to deprive of its warm comfortable home and beautiful eggs. He cannot tell you, if you ask him, of what the nest is composed, nor how nor when it was built, much less can he answer the question which we have just put to our readers,—

WHAT IS AN EGG?

"Well," we hear some one say, "an Egg is a thing of an oval shape, large or small, white or coloured and speckled, as the case may be; it has a shell which breaks if you knock it, because it is brittle; and inside is a yellow substance called the yolk, surrounded by a white, clear liquid; if you boil it for a little time it becomes *set*, so that you can take it up in a spoon, and

in this state it is good to eat. Oh! very good, I like an egg, especially for breakfast, with a little salt; and then eggs, and other things with them, make custards, and pancakes, and puddings, and all sorts of nice things; and then I recollect some such funny ‘*Stanzas to an Egg by a Spoon,*’ which begin,

‘Pledge of a feathered pair’s affection,
Kidnapped in thy downy nest,
Soon for my breakfast—sad reflection!
Must thou in yon pot be drest.’”

Well, never mind the rest. Now listen to our definition of an Egg. The word itself, we may observe first of all, is of Saxon origin; that this is how the ancient dwellers on our island used to write it æ ƿ, you may call it *aeg* or *oeg*, which you like. Johnson says the term means, “That which is laid by feathered and some other animals, from which their young is produced;” it is also, we are told by the same authority, “the spawn or sperm of other creatures,” as fish, which are said, you know, not to lay eggs, but to *spawn*. Another dictionary-maker defines it to be “the *ovum* of birds,” giving us here the Latin for egg, hence that peculiar shape is called *oval*, and the science of eggs is sometimes termed

OVOLOGY.

As we have told you in a former page of this volume, *Oology* is another term for this science, which has occupied the attention of many learned men, who have gone deeper into Eggs than ever you or I shall, and

told us such strange things about them, as would scarcely be believed by the very hens that laid them. Little does the happy mother think, when she goes cackling about the yard, proclaiming the event, that she has produced such a wonderful object. It looks a simple affair enough, one might make a thing very like it with a piece of chalk; touch it, roll it about; boil it, eat it, or crack it, and let the inside flow out; there's the yellow, and there's the white; there's nothing very particular in that, all eggs are so. Well, who made them so? and of what *are* they made? and what reason is there for this peculiar arrangement of the different parts of an Egg? and how is it that, under certain circumstances, so complete a change should take place in the nature of its contents—that the fluids should be gradually absorbed into a solid body, and that, by and by, at the end of a period which can be calculated to a nicety, the shell should be burst open, and there should come forth a living creature? Truly this *is* wonderful; but we are surrounded by wonders, and only heed them not because they are so common.

Common is the vital air,
Common is the azure sky,
Common flowers are everywhere,
Common stars shine out on high :
Music of the forest bird,
Cometh without stint or measure,
Friendly smile and loving word,
Common are as joy and pleasure ;
Why from *common* things then turn,
And for the *uncommon* yearn ?

But about this common thing, an Egg? It is the

germ or seed, so to speak, of animal life ; in it is contained all that is necessary for the formation of the perfect living creature ; in that little oval case lie, snugly packed up, bones, and muscles, and sinews, and all the delicate parts—organs, as they would be called, from a Greek word signifying an instrument : thus the tongue is an organ of speech, the eye of sight, and so on. But all these organs are in an *undeveloped* state, as the flower is in the bud ; *develope* is a French word, and signifies to unroll or unfold. The animal is there in *embryo* ; this again is Greek, and means a thing unperfected or unfinished, so the poet Thomson says :—

“ While the promised fruit
Lies yet a little *embryo* unperceived,
Within its crimson folds.”

And so, with closer reference to our subject, we might say :—

While the promised bird
Lies yet a little *embryo* unperceived,
Within its oval shell.

Dr. Harvey, who made that great discovery, the circulation of the blood, uttered a truth when he said *omne animal ex ovo*, every animal is born of an egg, for although some animals are *oviparous*, and others *viviparous*,—the two words come from *ovum* egg, *vivum* life, and *pario* to bring forth,—yet may the first stage of all animal life be compared to an Egg, from the smallest insect up to the most huge and unwieldy creature that swims in the deep sea or walks upon land. All were at one time alike, mere specks, surrounded by fluid matter which

afforded the material for growth and nourishment, and enclosed in some kind of a case, which if not exactly like an egg shell, answers the same purpose of protection from injury.

What a vast difference is there between the bright-winged insect, whose history we traced in our volume on Butterflies, and the bird with downy plumage and the voice of melody ; between that again and the great crocodile, in his scaly coat of mail ; the mighty boa-constrictor, king of serpents ; or that tyrant of the deep, the fierce voracious shark ; and yet all these come from eggs, very similar in form, and precisely so in their nature and internal construction. Look too at the difference in size between the egg of the humming-bird, no bigger than a pea, and that of the ostrich, as large as a man's head nearly, or bigger still that of the epyornis, of which fossil remains have been found in Madagascar, the contents of which must have been equal to six ostrichs' or one hundred and forty-eight common hens' eggs, that is, about seventeen English pints ; and yet in all these the germ, or as it would be called, the vital principle, that is, the principle of life, is but a tiny speck or circle, which is attached to the membrane that surrounds the yellow portion or yolk ; it is from this that the animal in embryo derives nourishment, and the size of it, and consequently of the whole egg, is in proportion to the quantity that is required to sustain life until the protection of the shell is no longer necessary. There is only so much food stored up as the bird or reptile, or whatever it may be, requires before it is strong enough to make an opening in its prison and come forth

to provide for itself or be fed by the parent. Some creatures that eventually attain a large size are born or *hatched*, as it is termed, comparatively small; thus the size of the egg is not always in proportion to that of the animal which lays it; the crocodile's egg, for instance, is but little larger than that of the common fowl; the young comes forth like a small lizard, about two or three inches long, takes to the water at once, and begins to catch insects on its own account; its mother may be twenty or thirty feet in length. Most creatures that produce eggs small in proportion to their size lay a great many; this is especially the case with fish, whose *spawn* must be numbered by millions; it has been calculated that if the young of a single pair of herrings were suffered to breed undisturbed, they would in twenty years together make up a bulk six times the size of the earth; but so many creatures feed upon this spawn, that few of the eggs of which it is composed ever come to young fish, that is, comparatively few, for the vast shoals which every year visit our shores, for the purpose of depositing their spawn in shallow water, show that immense numbers must escape the dangers to which they are exposed. There are some fish of the fierce and rapacious kind, such as the ray, the dog-fish, and the shark, which attain a considerable size before they lose the protection of the egg-shell, which is of a very peculiar shape and construction, being of a leathery texture, flat, and four-cornered, with a long curling string-like projection from each corner; frequenters of the coast, to whom they are very familiar objects, being often cast up on the beach, call them mermaid's purses,

and fairy purses, while the clustered eggs of the cuttle-fish they term sea grapes.

All eggs require warmth to hatch them; the fishes know this, not as we know it, because we have read, or been told so, and can *reason* upon causes and consequences, and so understand *why*, but they know it *instinctively*. They possess, in common with all un-reasoning creatures, what we call *instinct*, that is, a natural impulse in the right way, and at the proper time, whatever may be necessary for the maintenance of that state of existence in which God has placed them; so instinct directs the fishes when the time for spawning has arrived, to leave the deep waters, where they generally remain safe from the pursuit of man, for the shores, where the warmth of the sun can reach the eggs, and awaken the principle of life within them. So instinct teaches the bird to leave its winter home, in some far southern country, and fly hundreds of miles across land and ocean, to reach a spot suitable for the purpose of breeding and rearing its young; to collect the materials and to build its nest, and after the eggs are laid, to sit patiently on them the appointed time; to select the food proper for those little gaping bills, and to tend the fledglings carefully, until they are able to fly and provide for themselves, and then, when their wings are strong enough for the journey, and their food begins to get scarce, away they go back to the south of Europe or Africa, straight as an arrow, and the young ones, which have never flown that way before, seem to know it as well as those which have been backwards and forwards often and often.

But the egg, what of that? Can we describe its nature and construction in a way sufficiently clear for our readers to understand? Let us try:—it is like a series of cases or envelopes, one within the other; the outer one only, which is the last formed, being hard and unelastic, that is, it will not stretch or change its shape. Like the shells of some fish, and other testaceous animals, it is composed of carbonate of lime, which the animal has the power of secreting, as it is called, from its food. Hens sometimes lay soft eggs, without a shell; this shows a deficiency of the secreting power, or a want of the necessary material, and may generally be remedied by mixing some chalk with the food, or scattering it about the yard. Next to the shell is a skin called the *membrana putaminis*, that means the membrane or skin of the shell; it has also a Greek name, *chorian*; it is divided into two layers, which separate at the larger end, and leave a space called the *vesicula aeris*, that is, air-vesicle, or little bladder; this contains the air necessary for the chick to breathe before it chips the shell. Enclosed in this membrane is the *albumen*, or white fluid, sometimes called the *glair*, from the Latin *glarea*: in the same language *albus* means white; and our readers who live in Albion, so called from her chalky cliffs, ought to see at once whence we derive the word *albumen*; the little cords by which this bag of fluid is suspended are called *chalaza*. This word comes from a Greek root, and has reference to the connection between the suspending chords and the germ, or spot, in which is the vital principle.

We now come to what may be called the provision-

bag, because it encloses the yolk, which serves as food for the animal in embryo ; it is called *membrana vitelli*, or the skin of life. Thus our examination of the egg has brought to view the three great necessities of all existence—*protection*, the shell and albumen ; *nutrition* or food, the yolk ; and the *vital principle*, to understand the nature of which has puzzled the greatest philosophers that the world ever saw. It is said in the Scriptures that God breathed into man the breath of life, but what this may be we can none of us tell ; it is given to us and we *live*, it is taken away from us and we *die* ; and so do all God's creatures, which by Him, and Him alone, live, and move, and have their being. Man can do many wonderful things, but he has not yet been, nor will he ever be, able to make an egg, much less to produce a chick from it.

Let us now fancy that we are looking upon one of these strange little elongated globes, and that instead of being *opaque*, that is, dark, not clear, it is transparent, so that we can see into it, and observe the changes which are taking place there. The mother-bird has been sitting on it for, say twelve hours, and the warmth of her body has called into action the principle of growth, or of vitality ; the little spot and ring in the centre of the yolk have become somewhat enlarged and changed in form ; they are no longer round, but the outline is irregular, showing a tendency to shoot or spread out on all sides. Four hours later shows them yet more enlarged, and getting into an oval shape, with a distinct, though somewhat broken line down the centre. When the *incubation* has lasted

thirty-six hours, (the meaning of this word was fully explained at page 2) there is a still greater increase in the germ, and a spreading of its mottled margin over a portion of the yolk; if at this stage of growth we examine it through a magnifying-glass, we shall see a little body like some curious kind of caterpillar, and veins shaped like stags' horns branching out of it in every direction. On the fourth day the chick is a more strange-looking object still, with great projecting eyes with rings round them, like spectacles, and what appears to be a very blunt sort of a snout or muzzle; the whole head, and there is not much else, reminds one of that of a serpent, it might be the Cobra di Capello, or the Spectacle Snake, seen through a diminishing glass. But we cannot give a proper description of it, so we have called in the aid of our artist, who has furnished us, on the next page, with portraits of the interesting creature at four different stages of its growth. In the last we get a side view, and begin to fancy we discover some resemblance to a baby-fowl, although a very hideous one.

All this time a great change has been going on in the whole interior of the egg; the chick has, of course, greatly increased, and the red veins have become more numerous, and spread over the entire surface; the yolk is scarcely distinguishable from the other portions. Now, too, the bones of the chick have begun to form, and we clearly perceive the projection of the wings and the stump of the tail, while the pupil of the eye is quite clear and distinct. Larger and larger the creature grows, until it fills all the space, and has to be doubled

up in a very curious manner, with the feet and the head brought together, and the bill close to the shell,



36 hours.



4 days.



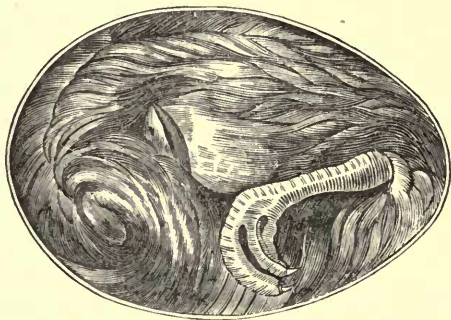
6 days.



10 days.

ready to be used as the instrument of liberation. Many persons suppose that the parent bird chips the shell, but this is not so; it is done by the little creature within, which has first to make its way through a thick

membrane or skin ; this it does on the twenty-first day of incubation. We are speaking now of the common fowl ; the periods in different species of birds vary considerably, although the process of growth in all is the same. One wonders how, with its soft bill, the little creature can make its way through the tough skin, and hard, though brittle shell ; but it must be remembered that the elastic skin is stretched to its greatest extent, and when in this state a slight prick will make a large opening ; and the shell too is, no doubt by the pressure from within, rendered less capable of resisting the stroke, slight though it be, of the bill of the prisoner, which does sometimes fail to make its escape, and dies in confinement, if not released by some friendly hand from without.



As if to assist in the work of opening a passage to the light and air, there is found on the tip of the chick's bill a small horny scale, having at the centre a hard and sharp projecting point, which, from the position of the head, is brought into direct and constant contact

with the inner surface of the shell ; this scale soon loosens and comes away after the chick is hatched, there is then no further use for it. The preceding figure represents the chick as it lies closely folded up on the twenty-first day, just previous to its deliverance from bondage.

We have now finished our account of this wonderful process, and may say in the words of a recent writer, "Dull indeed of soul must the man be, (or boy either,) in whom an egg does not inspire emotions of awe and admiration, wonder and worship. The circle of life is from the adult (fully-grown animal) to the egg. This is the vital round—the beginning and the ending—the ending and the beginning. The wheel goes round continually, life kindling sparks of life ; and what is called death is the worn out forms becoming cold and decaying away."

HOW TO PRESERVE EGGS FOR THE CABINET.

For this purpose eggs which are newly laid should always be chosen, as any decomposition of the contents will, probably, cause a discolouration of the shell. Make a hole at the smaller end, with an awl, or some other pointed instrument, and another at the larger end, which should be as small as possible—merely a pin hole will do ; to this latter the mouth must be applied to blow out the contents. If the yolk does not come out readily, get a cup full of water, and immersing the sharp end into it, put your mouth to the blunt

end, and suck up some of the water into the shell ; then shake it about well, and blow it out again ; repeat this operation two or three times, if necessary. If the shell has got soiled in any way, wash it well in strong lather, using a nail-brush if the stains do not come off readily, but great care must be taken in the handling of so brittle and fragile an article. Now as the membrane which lines the shell would be likely to decompose, and render it offensive, if not injure its beauty, it is best to wash the inside with a solution of the bichloride of mercury, commonly called corrosive sublimate, in spirits of wine ; this solution should be prepared by a chemist, and used with great caution, as it is extremely poisonous. Pour it into a wineglass, and holding the egg firmly, yet tenderly, with the finger and thumb, which should not touch the liquid, put the smaller end therein ; then apply the mouth, as previously directed, to the larger end, and suck up gently ; cease doing so as soon as you are aware, by a cold sensation in the finger and thumb, that the liquid has entered the shell, which then take up by the two ends, so as to stop the orifice, and shake it well ; then blow the solution back into the glass, taking care to wash the lips or the fingers if it comes in contact with either of them. The Oological specimen will soon dry, and is now ready for the cabinet. To render it more glossy and brilliant, it may have a coat of mastic varnish, put on thinly with a camel-hair brush, or, if the egg be of a blue or green tint, as many are, a solution of very pure white gum arabic is best, as the varnish is apt to injure those delicate colours.

As to the formation of the cabinet, and arrangement of the eggs therein, directions are scarcely necessary ; this must depend very much upon the means and conveniences, as well as the taste of the collector. Shallow drawers with divisions sufficiently broad for the names of the specimens to be written or pasted along the tops, are perhaps best. Small pill-boxes, which may have the names on the lids, are not bad receptacles, and the cost of a few dozens of these is not much ; but above all things let the arrangements be carried out with neatness and order ; do not let the specimens be huddled together, but classified, and placed so that the hand may be laid upon any one which may be required. Duplicates for exchanging with other collectors, or replacing any which may be broken, may be put carefully in a drawer by themselves, their presence with the others will only cause unnecessary confusion and trouble.

Care should be taken not to name a specimen positively ; if there is any doubt of its identity, it may be named with a query ; and in the note-book, which every collector should keep, should be entered all the circumstances which weigh for or against the correctness of the designation given to it. This note-book ought to be a complete record of the time and place of acquisition of every specimen included in the collection, and of all that is curious or interesting connected with it. If nests as well as eggs are preserved, of course drawers with divisions are the very best receptacles ; they occupy a great deal of space, and, except in some cases where the structure is peculiarly neat or curious, it is perhaps scarcely worth while to take and preserve them, espe-


cially as doing so often involves a cruel spoliation of the feathered architects, whose carefully chosen situations for building are well described by Dr. Bidlake, in his "Walks in a Forest,"

"The cavern-loving Wren sequester'd seeks
The verdant shelter of the hollow stump;
And with congenial moss, harmless deceit,
Constructs a safe abode. On topmost boughs
The glossy Raven, and the hoarse-voiced Crow,
Rock'd by the storm, erect their airy nests.
The Ouzel, lone frequenter of the grove
Of fragrant pines, in solemn depths of shade
Finds rest, or 'mid the holly's shining leaves;
A simple bush, the piping Thrush contents,
Though in the woodland concert he aloft
Trills from his spotted throat a powerful strain,
And scorns the humble choir. The Lark too asks
A lowly dwelling hid beneath the turf,
A hollow trodden by the sinking hoof:
Songster of heaven! who to the sun such lays
Pours forth as earth ne'er owns. Within the hedge
The Sparrow lays her sky-blue eggs. The barn,
With eaves o'er-pendent, holds the chattering tribe.
Secret the Linnet seeks the tangled copse.
The White Owls seek some ruin'd antique wall,
Fearless of rapine; or in hollow trees,
Which age has cavern'd, safely courts repose.
The thievish Pie, in twofold colours clad,
Roofs o'er her curious nest with firm wreath'd twigs,
And side-long forms her cautious door; she dreads
The talon'd Kite, or pouncing Hawk, savage
Herself, with craft suspicion ever dwells."



FACTS AND ANECDOTES OF NESTS AND EGGS.

EASTER EGGS.

URING the fifteen days after Easter, which constitute the Russian carnival, the people of that country supply themselves with eggs, variously coloured, which they send or give to one another as presents; and when they meet during this time they salute with the words, "Christ is risen;" to which the other having answered, "He is certainly risen," they kiss one another. He that salutes first is obliged to present the other with an egg; no one, of whatever rank or sex, being allowed to refuse either the egg or the kiss. This custom prevails in many Catholic countries; the eggs, it appears, being considered as an emblem of the resurrection.

EGGS USED AS COIN.

THE want of any copper coin in Peru has given rise to a curious practice of which Lieutenant Maw was in-

formed at Truxillo. A person coming to the market of that city, and not wishing to spend a real upon every article, purchases a real's worth of eggs, with which he or she proceeds to market; buying an egg's worth of vegetables from one, and so on from others, till all that was wanted has been obtained. The eggs are taken as current payment, and finally purchased themselves by those who require them for use.

ILLUMINATED NESTS.

THE birds that build hanging nests are at Cape Cormorin numerous. At night each of their little habitations is lighted up, as if to see company. The sagacious little bird fastens a bit of clay to the top of the nest, and then picks up a firefly, and sticks it on the clay to illuminate the dwelling, which consists of two rooms. Sometimes there are three or four fireflies, and their blaze of light in the little cell dazzles the eyes of the bats, which often kill the young of these birds.—*Dr. Buchanan.*

AN EGG WITHIN AN EGG.

A FEW years since, M. Seguin submitted to the Academy of Sciences at Paris, a hen's egg of extraordinary size, in which was a second egg. Its dimensions were eighty-eight millimètres by fifty-nine, or

nearly three inches and a half by two and a quarter. More recently, in 1855, there appeared in an English scientific journal, an account of a similar oological curiosity, produced in Scotland, in the case of a turkey's egg.

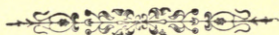
A BOY REPROVED BY A BIRD.

A CORRESPONDENT of 'The Youths' Instructor' relates the following anecdote, to which our young readers are earnestly requested to pay especial attention :—
“When quite young, in my boyish days, I had watched some sparrows carrying materials to build their nests (in the usual season), under the eaves of a cottage adjoining our own ; and although strict orders had been issued that none of us should climb up to the roofs of the houses, yet birds' eggs formed a temptation too powerful to be easily resisted, and self-gratification was considered rather than obedience. A favourable opportunity presenting itself, the roof of the house was ascended, and not only was the nest pillaged, but seized and carried away. It was soon stripped of all its unnecessary appendages, that it might appear as neat as possible. Amongst the *externals* thus removed was a piece of paper, which had been a page of one of Dr. Watts's hymn-books, and which, thrown away, had been taken by the poor bird for the purpose of strengthening the nest, or increasing its warmth. A word or two caught my eye, and I unfolded the paper. Need I

say that, boy as I was, I read these verses with, to say the least, *curious* feelings.

“ Why should I deprive my neighbour
Of his goods against his will ?
Hands were made for honest labour ;
Not to plunder or to steal.

Guard my heart, O God of heaven,
Lest I covet what's not mine ;
Lest I take what is not given,
Guard my hands and heart from sin.”



GOLDEN EAGLE.

BLACK EAGLE. BROWN EAGLE. RING-TAILED EAGLE

FIGURE I.



UCH are the various names by which this King of Birds is commonly known, all having reference to the colour of its plumage, which undergoes considerable changes in accordance with the bird's age and state of health. The term "golden" is probably derived from the rich tint of the feathers on the head and nape of the neck. Of Eagles we have in this country three kinds—the one above named, the Spotted Eagle, and the Osprey, or Sea Eagle: neither of them are common birds, but the Golden is the most so. It is found chiefly in the mountainous districts of Scotland and Ireland, where it builds its nest amid the inaccessible cliffs. My young readers will remember that magnificent description given of this rapacious bird in the book of Job:—

“The rock is the place of his habitation,
 He abides in the crag, the place of strength.
 Thence he pounces upon his prey.
 His eyes discern afar off.
 Even his young ones drink down blood:
 And, wherever is slaughter, there is he.”

The Scriptures contain many other striking allusions to the eagle, of whose natural history enough might be told to fill a book of itself, but our attention must for

the present be directed to its place and method of nidification—there's a long word! try and remember it! Let's turn to the dictionary and see what it means. Here it is—Nid-i-fi-ca-tion (five syllables), the act of building nests. It is derived, we see, from the Latin *nidificatio*, and that comes from *nidus*, a nest: so you must not call a man who builds a house a nidificator; only birds, and some insects and fishes, nidify—men and beasts do not; for though we have sometimes heard of “a mare's nest,” yet we cannot learn that such a thing was ever seen.

But let us now take a peep into the eyrie of the Eagle—another curious word that; it is sometimes spelled *eyry*, and means a place where birds of prey build and hatch their young: thus Milton says—

“The Eagle and the Stork
On cliffs and cedar tops their *eyries* build.”

This word has a Greek root, or derivative, signifying egg, so that, you see, it is very appropriate. It is desirable that the meaning of these terms should be borne in mind, as I may often have occasion to use them.

We will now suppose ourselves standing upon a narrow ledge of rock, hundreds of feet above the rugged glen, through which rushes a foaming torrent, whose hoarse voice comes upon our ears like a faint whisper; far above us rise the mountain peaks, gleaming white in the sunshine; and all around is sky, and rolling mist, and awful silence. Hark to that rapid beat of wings! scarce heard at first, it grows each moment more and more distinct. See yonder speck floating up from

the valley! Is it a bird? yes, and a large bird—an Eagle—a kingly Eagle! measuring, it may be, nine feet or more from tip to tip of the outspread pinions. It comes this way, and now from behind yonder projecting rock we hear shrill cries and fluttering sounds, which tell that the young birds are aware of the feast that their parent is bringing them. If we crouch close behind this detached mass, that looks ready to fall into the glen below, and peep through this fissure, we may see the family at their meal; they will all be there, for, see, the mother bird, who has also been out hunting for prey, approaches from an opposite direction. Awhile she hovered over the plain, floating almost motionless in mid-air; a hare stole timidly out of its covert, to gambol among the heather on the hill side; her keen eye marked it in an instant, and “swoop” down she came, straight and swift as an arrow, and poor puss is borne aloft, writhing and struggling in the gripe of the fierce bird.

See! there is the nest in this hollow, formed in the face of the cliff by the projecting stump of a withered tree, around which some earth has accumulated, and coarse herbage taken root and flourished. The hollow is lined scantily with a little grass and sheep’s wool, which has been used by the same pair of birds on this spot for many succeeding years. Sometimes the Eagle dispenses with a lining to its nest altogether, and deposits its two eggs (now and then, but very rarely, three) in the mere hollow in the rock; sometimes it uses small twigs or rushes, sea-weed, or heather, for the purpose.

The eggs vary in colour, from an almost pure white to a light russet brown, which, however, is not uniform, but is mottled and spotted; the size is generally about three inches long, by two and a third broad.

We will now leave the royal family at their feast—a young hare and a fat Sea Gull, the latter brought by the male bird, which we saw first returning, and descend, as best we may, from the perilous height whereon they have fixed their dwelling, fearless alike of the fowler's gun and the wintry storm, which, whistling and howling, sweeps around the cliff's tall head.

“The tawny Eagle seats his callow brood
High in the cliff, and feasts his young with blood;
On Snowdon's rocks, or Orkney's wide domain,
Whose beetling cliffs o'erhang the western main,
The royal bird his lonely kingdom forms
Amidst the gathering clouds and sullen storms;
Through the wide waste of air he darts his sight,
And holds his sounding pinions poised for flight
With cruel eye premeditates the war,
And marks his destined victim from afar;
Descending in a whirlwind to the ground,
His pinions like the rush of waters sound;
The fairest of the fold he bears away,
And to his nest compels the struggling prey,
He scorns the game by meaner hunters tore,
And dips his talons in no vulgar gore.”

MRS. BARBAULD.



PEREGRINE FALCON.

BLUE HAWK. GREY HAWK. HUNTING HAWK.
GOSHAWK. CLIFF-HAWK. COMMON FALCON.

FIGURE 2.



THIS bird with many names is the largest but one of the Falcon tribe, the very rare snowy Jer-Falcon only being superior to it in size. The term Falcon is derived from *Falco*, to cut with a bill or hook ; and Peregrine, from *Peregrinus*, a traveller, one who comes from a distant clime or country. These are both Latin derivations, and express, as do most of the scientific names used in natural history, some peculiarity in the conformation or habits of the creature to which they are applied. All the Falcons are distinguished by their sharp, powerful, curved beaks, adapted for tearing and cutting their prey ; they are beautiful birds, graceful in their forms and motions, swift of flight, keen of sight, and exceedingly bold and destructive ; they are to be found in almost every part of the world, ranging far and wide from their places of birth ; truly *peregrinators* are they, or we should rather say wanderers or travellers, for although this term, and also *peregrinations*, is to be found in the English dictionary, yet they are inconvenient words, and not often used.

Six species of Falcon have been found in Britain ; these are the Jer-Falcon, a very rare bird, the one about

which we are writing, the Hobby, the Orange-legged Hobby, the Merlin, and the Kestrel, of which we shall have more to say presently. The term Falcon does not occur in our translation of the Scriptures, but the word which has been rendered Hawk is supposed to refer to both Hawks and Falcons, these birds being nearly allied to and greatly resembling each other. In the ancient sport called Falconry, and sometimes hawking, both descriptions of birds were used to bring down the herons and other feathered game. This cruel sport is not much practised now, but a few trained birds are yet kept, and occasionally we hear of "a feat of Falconry" or "a Hawking match," a very different affair from the gay procession of knights and stately ladies, with multitudes of attendants, which in the olden time passed over the drawbridge of the grim castle into the green fields, amid the ringing of silver bells attached to the necks of the hooded Falcons, and the *ti-ra-la* of bugles, calling forth echoes from the silent forest.

And startling the heron that stood by the lake
To watch the fish glide, as though scarcely awake,
And making the wild duck fly screaming away,
And the pheasant his golden plumes spread to the day.

A well-trained Falcon was in former times deemed a present worthy of a king's acceptance; thus we read that the king of Scotland sent Edward the First a present of a "Falcon-gentle;" and that in the reign of James I one Sir Thomas Marson gave one thousand pounds for a cast, that is a couple, of Hawks.

The nest of the Peregrine Falcon is usually found on high cliffs overhanging the sea ; it is shallow and loosely constructed of sticks, sea-weed, and such like coarse materials, and is commonly lined with a little hair ; it is placed on a projection of the rock, or in a crevice, and is used by the same birds from year to year. A mere hollow in the bare rock is sometimes chosen by the hen bird, which deposits her eggs, from two to four in number, early in the spring ; the colour is light brownish-red, elegantly marbled over with darker shades, streaks, and patches ; both the markings and ground colour vary considerably in different varieties, and in accordance with the age of the bird ; the eggs generally measure about two inches in length, by one and a twelfth in breadth. The number of aquatic birds on which it can prey is the Peregrine's chief attraction to the sea-coast ; sometimes, however, it is found far in the interior, and an instance is on record of its having taken up its abode in the midst of London, on St. Paul's Cathedral, the attraction in this case being the nice plump pigeons which frequented the spot, one of which was struck and seized by the Falcon in Leicester Square.

High above the foaming seas,
Where the Guillemots are screaming,
Sits the Peregrine at ease,
Like a creature dreaming.
Is he wearied with his flight,
Circling wide and soaring high,
Seen amid the dawning light,
Like a faint speck in the sky ?

3



4



5



Is he sleeping, while his young
 Watch him with their eager eyes?
 No, his pinions wide are flung
 On the gale, and piercing cries
 From the caves beneath arise.
 Auks and Penguins flap their wings,
 Gulls fly off, a shrieking crowd;
 Up his capture now he brings,
 Like a conqueror proud:
 Feathers fly, all stained with gore,
 On the rocky ledge are more
 Bones, though plentiful before.



KESTREL.

KASTRIL. KISTRIL. WINDHOVER. STONEGALL.
 STEINGALL. STANNEL. KEELIE.

FIGURE 3.



HIS bird is also sometimes improperly called the Sparrow Hawk, being confounded with the species which we shall next have to describe, and to which that name properly belongs; it is one of the commonest of British Falcons, and may be found in all parts of our country, as well as in every quarter of the globe. Its scientific name is *Falco tinnunculus*, the latter term being derived, it is supposed, from the Latin verb *Tinnio*, to chirp. Although bold and fierce natu-

rally, it is not a difficult bird to tame. This species of Falcon it was that formed one of the "Happy Family" lately exhibited in London and elsewhere, so that many of our readers may have seen a live Kestrel, although sadly "cribbed, cabined, and confined," not hovering, as the wild free creature loves to do, with outspread wings, over the field or woodland, ready to dart down upon the first unfortunate mouse, lizard, frog, leveret, or small bird, which ventures into the sunshine to enjoy itself.

The habit of hovering almost motionless in the air, with the tail extended and the wings just slightly quivering, is quite characteristic of the Kestrel, and has gained for it the popular names of Stannell or Stand-gall, and Windhover; its descent upon its prey is described as resembling the falling of a stone from a great height, being swift, direct, and noiseless, and the mark aimed at, although in many instances very small, is seldom missed.

The nest of this bird is sometimes placed on precipitous heights on the sea shore, or elsewhere, sometimes amid ruins, and on church towers; even in populous cities it has been known to build, and in dove-cotes, where it must have been a most unwelcome intruder; holes in sandy banks, where they are sufficiently high to be out of reach, and also in the trunks of old trees, are at times the chosen places; in the tops of trees, as commonly as anywhere, and the deserted nests of Magpies, Ravens, and Jackdaws, are often taken possession of. When the Kestrel does take the trouble to build a nest for itself, it proves but a slovenly

workman ; just a few twigs scrambled together, without much attempt at interweaving, and a little hay or wool, or a few feathers thrown inside, and the habitation is ready ; no contract taken for a feathered building society, could be more hastily nor carelessly executed. When placed in rocks, or in banks, even this little trouble is dispensed with, and the nest is a mere hollow, with perhaps a few feathers inside. In fact none of these rapacious birds are careful builders—they never make their homes very comfortable ; they are the warriors of the feathered creation, and they care not for home pleasures : a position of strength and security is all they look for, and snug, warm, cozy nests are not for them. Constantly abroad, battling with the elements or with their kind, pursuing their prey, and dipping their talons in gore, all their joys are of a fierce and exciting nature ; they love not quietude, and peace dwells not in their habitations. They are most of them solitary birds, not congregating in flocks and forming little social communities, but living, each pair alone, like some robber in his rocky fortress, the terror of all around ; nevertheless they have their uses in the great scheme of creation ; and God has given to them their peculiar modes of enjoyment, with which, unless there is a real necessity for it, we should not interfere.

The eggs of the Kestrel are described by Mr. Morris, in his beautiful work on British Birds, as of an elliptical, that is, of an oval form, four or five in number, sometimes, though very rarely, as many as six ; of a reddish or yellowish brown colour, more or less speckled, or marbled over, with darker or lighter specks

or blots of the same, and some even with a dingy white. The size is on the average an inch and two thirds in length, by an inch and a quarter in breadth, so that they approach very nearly to a sphere or globe in shape.

It was customary to keep Falcons trained for sport, hooded or blindfolded, until they were loosened in pursuit of the game, and it is said that if one escaped with its hood on, it would keep soaring upwards, until it dropped dead from exhaustion : hence a modern poet addressing ambition says—

“ O thou who bidd’st the brightest veil
Their intellectual eye,
And to thy dizzy dangerous height
Like hooded Falcon fly.”



SPARROW HAWK.

FIGURE 4.



INGULAR to say, this well-known bird seems really unprovided with an alias, or second name; Sparrow Hawk he is called everywhere, at least in this country, though according to his scientific title, Finch Hawk would be equally appropriate. *Accipiter*, from *Accipio*, to take; and *Fringillarius*, from *Fringilla*, a Finch, being his Latin designation. The Ancient Britons, it appears, called him *Gwepia*; what that may mean we cannot exactly tell, but we should hardly think that it expressed any great degree of favour or affection. Next to the Kestrel, this is the most common of the Hawk and Falcon families, and no more daring and spirited bird is to be found. The Goshawk, a rare species in England, is a large and more powerful bird, but not nearly so bold as this, which has been known to skim over the poultry yard, and snatch up a chicken in the open day, when persons were looking on, and wondering at his impudence. Not always will the fear of the gamekeeper's gun keep him from the preserve; and many a young plump Partridge and Pheasant has he borne away to his nest in the fir tree top, on the ruined tower, or on the rocky ledge, as the case may be. He chooses for his dwelling pretty much the same kind of places as the Kestrel, and, like that bird, frequently avails himself of the labours of other feathered architects; sometimes ejecting

the rightful owner of a nest to which he takes a fancy: he too is a slovenly builder when he does condescend to such mere drudgery, and takes as little trouble in the selection of his materials as in the mode of putting them together.

The eggs of the Sparrow Hawk are nearly round, measuring about an inch and seven twelfths in length, by an inch and a quarter in breadth; their markings of a deep reddish brown, upon a bluish white ground, are bold and striking, and seem characteristic of the bird, whose actions and motions are all decided, quick, and fearless. He has even been known to attack his fierce and powerful king, the Golden Eagle, and make it drop the prey which it was bearing to its expecting family of princes and princesses. Think of that! Perhaps this rebellious subject wanted the Grouse, which he obliged his monarch to relinquish, for his mate, who was sitting upon three, four, five, six, or it might be even seven eggs, in that slovenly home of his; these eggs might be of a bluish white colour, with large brown blotches dashed over the larger end; or of a pale dull olive, or of a dull white ground, with patches and streaks of various shades; or even of a clear white with no markings at all; but this latter is *very* unlikely, only one laying of such having been discovered, that we have heard of: and this was in a nest of five eggs procured in 1851, by N. Rowe, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, as recorded by Mr. Morris, in his 'Nests and Eggs of British Birds.'

High, high, in the clear blue sky,
There is a shadow; the Hawk is nigh;

Birds in the woodland cease to sing;
 Crows the cock defyingly:
 From the brown hen's swelling throat,
 "Cluck cluck," comes the warning note,
 As she gathers her chickens beneath her wing.
 Farmer Giles takes down his gun,
 And the ploughboy shades his eyes from the sun,
 And the dog looks on, expecting fun.
 Bang! no, missed! and the Hawk sweeps by,
 Turning round, as much as to say—
 I'm sorry you've thrown your powder away!
 I'll visit the farm-yard some other day.



BARN OWL.

CHURCH OWL. SCREECH OWL. WHITE OWL. HISSING
 OWL. MADGE OWL. YELLOW OWL. HOWLET.
 GILLIHOWTER.

FIGURE 5.



WE have here a good choice of names; our readers may take which they like, or they may go back to the Ancient British, and call the bird *Dylluan Wen*: or refer to the nomenclature of modern science, and speak of the *Strix Flammea*, the first term applying to the whole family of Owls, and the last derived from *flamma*, flame, distinguishing this particular species, the upper parts of whose plumage is mostly of a yellow colour. In the lists of British Birds

given by naturalists, there are no less than ten distinct species of Owls, the smallest being the Scops, or Little Horned Owl, and the largest the Great Eagle Owl; these, and several others named in the lists, are very rare birds with us, indeed not above three of the species may be called common; the one which we are now noticing, the Mottled Tufted, and the Brown or Tawny Owl, may fairly claim this distinction, although the last named will soon, it is likely, become a rare bird, being devoted to death whenever found, partly on account of the superstitious dread inspired by its dismal hooting, and partly for its real or supposed destructiveness amongst the young of game, both furred and feathered. In truth, the dismal 'hoo-hoo-hoo' of the Tawny Owl, as well as the shriller screech of the White Owl, are enough to make one's hair stand on end, breaking, as they do, the stillness of the night, and filling churchyards and all ruinous and desolate places with strange unearthly echoes: but after all it is but the cry of a bird—an empty sound, proceeding from quite natural causes, and ought not to frighten us, any more than the ghost-like figure of the creature which emits it, which we sometimes catch a glimpse of as it glides in that noiseless manner peculiar to Owls, amid the twilight of evening, across the meadow and along the hedge-row, looking out for a stray mouse, or rat, or mole, or other small animal.

These Barn Owls are great destroyers of mice; a pair of them have been known, as Bishop Stanley says, to take as many as forty to their nest in the course of an hour. How useful then must they be to man, who

ought to protect, instead of destroy them, as he too often does: the little mischief which they do must be far more than counterbalanced by the war they wage upon all kinds of destructive vermin.

If you want to find a Barn Owl's nest, you must look for it—where? why in a barn of course; perhaps a hasty reader will reply; nay, not so fast: sometimes it may there be found; high up, above the stout cross-beam, beneath the thatched roof, with a thick curtain of cobweb before it, you may see, if you are venture-some enough to climb thus far, where a broadish ledge is formed by the meeting of the wall and the thatch, and the old cross-beam, the rude structure—just a few sticks laid loosely together, with a little hay or straw on the top. And there sits the goggle-eyed, wise-looking bird, upon her two or three, or it may be as many as five or six, white roundish eggs, about an inch and a half long, by one and a quarter broad, as contented as possible. If the thrashers are at work below, she does not heed them at all, only keeps a sharp look out for the squeakers which they disturb in turning over the sheaves. Every now and then, down she comes upon her noiseless wings, with great swiftness, her white and yellow plumage gleaming in the dusk like flash of light; and ten to one but she returns to her nest with a live creature struggling in her claws, to be killed and eaten at leisure. If her young are hatched her visits to the barn floor are very frequent indeed and should there be no exit through the thatch, which there frequently is, her mate and she keep flying out and in at the door, as if they had a world of business

at their hands, as indeed they have! Not commonly, however, does the Barn Owl obtain such comfortable quarters, but resorts to all sorts of out-of-the-way places: hollow trees, and ivy-covered steeples and ruins, the more dreary and lonesome the better, and if a building of any kind is deserted and gets "a bad name;" there, as Gray says in his beautiful "Elegy on a country churchyard"—

"The moping Owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign."

The ancients, you know, dedicated the Owl to Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom, on account, no doubt, of its exceedingly grave and sensible look. It is shown by commentators, that is, writers who undertake to explain the meaning of the Scriptures, that the word translated Owl, in our version of the Bible, often refers to some other and quite different bird. Several of the references are, however, correctly given, as in Isaiah xxxiv, 14, where the "Screech Owl" is mentioned as a bird which haunts lonely and desolate places. We will leave our readers to find out this and other passages alluding to this bird; and treat them to an Owl song, written by Alfred Tennyson, the Poet Laureate of England:—

"When cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round,—
Alone, and warming his five wits,
The White Owl in the belfry sits.

7



6



8



9



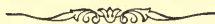
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11




When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock has sung beneath the hatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay,—
Alone, and warming his five wits,
The White Owl in the belfry sits.”



RED-BACKED SHRIKE.

BUTCHER BIRD. FLUSHER. CHEETER. MURDERING
PIE. JACK BAKER. WHISKEY JOHN. NINE-KILLER.

FIGURE 6.

HERE again we have a choice of names, and curious names some of them are, not very complimentary to the bird, although sufficiently expressive of the estimation in which it is generally held. We cannot imagine for a moment that Jack Baker can be a respectable member of feathered society, and Whiskey John is evidently a haunter of public houses and such low places. The first, fourth, and last of the above names are really shocking; we do not care to repeat them; let us see if the scientific title is more pleasing—*Lanius collurio*, from *lanius*, a butcher—ah! there we are again in the slaughter-house; and what the other term means nobody seems to know,

and it would not do for us to pretend to be wiser than the learned in such matters. The bird is called Flusher, or Flasher, because when it darts through the air, the rich reddish brown plumage on the back and wings has the effect of flashes of dull fire; and Cheeter, we suppose, from its peculiarly shrill harsh note, for all which, however, the bird is not a bad songster.

The Great Grey Shrike, and the Woodchat Shrike, are two other species of the *Lanius* genus, as naturalists call the Butcher Birds, which are found in this country. The one which we are noticing is by far the most common. It is a migratory bird, that is, one which does not remain all the year in a single district or country, but migrates, changes or shifts its residence,—*migro*, in Latin, signifying to go, to depart. It arrives here at about the end of April or beginning of May, and leaves again in September or October, as many other birds do, for a warmer climate, where they will find a greater abundance of insects or other food. The Shrikes have been called Butcher Birds from a peculiar habit which they have of sticking their prey, which consists of lizards, frogs, mice, small birds, and the larger kinds of insects, upon thorns or other sharp projections, and so devouring it at leisure: they make a sort of shambles of the hedge-row, and perhaps drive a brisk trade in hind-quarters of cockroaches, mice tails, frogs' heads, and the like delicacies.

The nest of the Red-backed Shrike is rather a neat affair, large for the size of the bird, which seldom weighs more than an ounce, being six or seven inches across the top; stalks of plants, grass, wool, and moss

form the exterior portion, while the lining is fine fibres of roots, and sometimes hair. The nest is placed in a hedge or bush, and generally but little concealed from view.

The eggs are five or six in number, usually of a pale reddish white, spotted with brown and red: they are ten and a half twelfths of an inch long, by seven twelfths in breadth.

With eager eye, and half-expanded wings,
The Butcher Bird sits watching for its prey,
Amid the sunshine of a summer's day,
And many a wary glance around he flings;
In mid-air flit and flutter glittering things,
Enjoying all life's pleasures while they may,
Unconscious that the spoiler lurketh aye
Where pleasure sweetly to the charmed ear sings;
There is a whirring sound—a sudden cry;—
The Butcher Bird hath darted from his twig,
A form the less is in the sunny sky,
But who shall heed its loss; that moment, big
With fate to one, hath passed unmarked of all;
So man sinks down, and dies, in life's great carnival.



SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.

GREY FLYCATCHER. BEE BIRD. BEAM BIRD. COBWEB
 BIRD. POST BIRD. RAFTER. CHERRY CHOPPER.
 CHERRY SUCKER. CHANCHIDER.

FIGURE 7.



THIS bird, which was the *Y Gwybedog* of the Ancient British, is the *Muscicapa grisola* of modern naturalists, the first part of the name being compounded of the Latin words *musca*, a fly, and *capio*, to take or catch; we cannot tell what the meaning of the second part may be. The above popular titles would indicate that it is both a frugiverous and insectivorous bird, that is, that it feeds upon both fruits and insects, but of the former it takes so little as to be scarcely worthy of notice, although it is often destroyed under the idea that it is a great orchard depredator. When found in the cherry or fruit trees, it is generally in pursuit of insects which feed there, and of them it destroys immense numbers. It usually perches on the top of a branch, or some other projection; and looks "all of a lump," as if it were asleep; but woe be to the buzzing blue-bottle, or droning wasp, that comes near;—off it darts; the perch is empty for a moment; you hear a snap of the bill, and look up again, and there sits the little brown and grey bird, just as quietly as if nothing had happened. We have two species of Flycatchers in this country, the Pied, which is some-

times called the Goldfinch, and is a rare bird, and the Spotted or Grey Flycatcher. They are both migratory birds, coming in May, and departing in September or October.

The nest of our brisk little insect-killer is commonly built in the orchard or garden, or somewhere not far from the dwelling-house, and they are not at all shy or timid. Singular resting-places are sometimes chosen by this bird, for instance the top of a lamp-post in Leeds, and even in the great city of London, near Portman Square, where, as Mr. Jesse mentions, a nest with five eggs was taken; the head of a garden rake, left by accident near a cottage; a bird-cage suspended with the door open in the branch of a tree; the trellis-work over the drawing-room window at Nafferton vicarage, where Mr. Morris wrote his interesting account of this and other British Birds, and many instances of the kind might be mentioned.

The materials used for the nest, which is generally built about the beginning of June, are small twigs, catkins, and moss; the lining is feathers, hair, down, and cobwebs, hence one of the popular names of the bird; it is a neat little structure, and usually contains four or five eggs, of a greyish or greenish white, spotted with pale orange brown, and having sometimes blots of greyish red at the larger end; size, nine twelfths of an inch long, by six and a half broad. There are sometimes two broods in the year.

THE PIED AND SPOTTED FLYCATCHERS.

One is a dweller 'mid the frowning hills
Of Derbyshire, and rocky Westmoreland,
Where silent awe the gazer's bosom fills
To view the nodding tors and cliffs, that stand
In wild confusion tossed on every hand :—
To gaze adown the clefts and deep ravines,
And listen to the roar—as thunder grand—
Of falling waters ;—yes, he loves those scenes,
Wherein the form of man but seldom intervenes.

The other, more familiar, makes his nest
Hard by the populous town ; within the shed
Devoted to man's use, he takes his rest,
And there his callow brood are reared and fed ;
And when the sun-kissed cherry turneth red,
Parents and younglings to the orchard-ground
Are by the calls of secret instinct led,
For there their prey most plentiful is found,
In gauzy-winged flies the fruit that hover round.



DIPPER.

WATER OUZEL. WATER CROW. WATER PIET. DUCKS.

FIGURE 8.



THE scientific name of this bird is *Sturnus cinclus*, or as some say *Cinclus Europæus*, that is, the European Dipper. It is a bird which frequents rivers and streams, perching on stones or on the banks, and descending to the bottom in search of aquatic insects and small shell-fish, on which it principally feeds. It possesses an extraordinary power of remaining a long time under water, and some writers have asserted that it can walk on the bed of the stream without inconvenience; but this does not appear to be correct; its breathing organs are like those of other birds, and although it has rather a stout heavy body, and little or no tail, yet its plumage is too light and buoyant to admit of such a feat. The bird just makes a rapid plunge, which carries it down, and remains only long enough to secure its prey, using no doubt great exertion, both with wings and legs, to keep itself beneath the water; the latter are short, and ill adapted for walking, but the claws are long and curved, and well calculated to secure a steady footing upon slippery stones.

The Dippers are tolerably numerous in this country, and yet they are not generally known, for they haunt retired spots, and are confined to few localities; they

are more plentiful in Scotland than in England. They build a broad flattish nest, like a magnified powder-puff, with a little hole in front or on one side, only it is not made of white down, but generally of moss and grass, and lined with dry leaves. It is placed near the water, and usually concealed from view by an overhanging bank, a rocky projection, or the spreading roots of a river-side tree; it is a very warm comfortable abode, and large for the size of the bird; it has been found in the spokes of a disused water-wheel, and also in a very pretty picturesque situation, with the current of a cascade falling down before it like a glass curtain. When the little Dippers are nearly fledged, if you go too near the nest and frighten them, they will tumble out head over heels, and go plump into the water, in the most ludicrous manner imaginable.

The eggs of the Water Ouzel are five or six in number, of a longish oval shape, rather pointed at one end: their colour is pure white, and they are about an inch long, by nine twelfths broad.

The neat little Dipper, he lives by the stream
Where the beams of the sun on the bright ripples gleam;
And he builds him a house all of moss, soft and warm,
To shelter his young from the wind and the storm.
There he pops in and out, and he flits up and down,
And he stays 'neath the wave, till you think he would drown.



MISSEL, OR, MISTLE THRUSH.

SHRITE. GREY THRUSH.

HOLM THRUSH. SCREECH THRUSH. STORM-COCK.

FIGURE 9.



HIS is the largest of British Song Birds, and a loud, strong-voiced, noisy fellow he is; taking delight to sit upon a post, or some elevated spot, when the wind is whistling, and the lightning flashing, and the thunder rattling around, and shriek away as if in defiance of the elements, whence he has obtained the last two of the above popular names. Naturalists call him *Turdus viscivorus*; the first word signifying a Thrush, and the second a plant growing upon the trunks of oak, ash, and other large trees, and called mistletoe; the juices of this plant are of a sticky nature, good for making bird-lime, to express which quality we have adopted the Latin phrase, and say viscid. Here again you see how expressive are those scientific terms if well looked into. Holm is an old Saxon term; it signifies the Ilex, or evergreen oak, and was applied to the bird probably because it was observed to frequent that kind of tree, on which the mistletoe, of whose berries it is very fond, grew most plentifully. Shrite must also be Saxon, no doubt expressive of the loud shrill note of the bird.

The Missel Thrush is a permanent resident in this country, although some flocks arrive here in October

and leave again in May, congregating with the Common Thrushes, Fieldfares, and other birds of the kind, which settle on our snow-covered fields in winter, and afford some excellent sport for the fowler. It is a bold quarrelsome bird, and is frequently engaged in warfare with other members of the feathered tribes, in which it is generally victorious; hence the Welsh people call it *Peun y llwyn*—master of the coppice.

Gilbert White, in his 'Natural History of Selborne,' a book full of interesting and entertaining observations on animals of all kinds, alludes to the fierceness of this bird, and says that in Hampshire it builds much in orchards. This naturalist also relates that, although the Missel Thrush is generally successful in defence of his family against the attacks of larger birds, yet he once observed several Magpies destroy both nest and young, which they swallowed alive, although the sitting hen used all her powers to repel them.

This bird is one of our earliest builders, commencing usually in April; the nest is fixed on the fork of a branch generally high up in the tree; frequently an apple tree in an orchard is the chosen spot; sometimes considerable art is displayed in concealing it from view, at others it is quite exposed. It is carefully and neatly made, externally with lichens, moss, dry grass, and stems of various plants; within which is a layer of mud, and over that a lining of fine grass.

The eggs are four or five in number, of a greenish-white colour, spotted with reddish brown; sometimes the ground colour is reddish white, with dark red-brown spots. There are two broods in the year. In

the spring and summer the bird feeds chiefly on worms and insects ; in autumn and winter on various kinds of berries.

“ See, the *Blackbird* and the *Thrush*
Are inmates of the lowly bush ;
And, nestling in the lofty tree,
The *Missel-bird* our inmate see.
Already may the curious eye
Aslant their patient forms descry
Close covering : let the passing glance
Suffice thee ; nor with rush advance,
Or motion of the extended arm
The mother from her charge alarm.”

BISHOP MANT, “*On April.*”



SONG THRUSH.

THRUSH. MAVIS. THROSTLE.

FIGURE 10.



TURDUS MUSICUS is the scientific name of this loud and sweet songster, which is one of the most common of our British Birds. Should my readers have forgotten what the first of these Latin terms signifies, let them turn to the bird last described ; the second term has reference to its musical powers, which, as we all know, are very great. Old English and Scottish writers often allude to the Thrush under the name of Mavis and Throstle, and in Scotland to this day it is more frequently called by the first of these names than by any other ; thus Burns says—

“The *Mavis* wild, wi’ many a note,
 Sings drowsy day to rest.”

While William Browne, an English poet of the seventeenth century, when he went forth in the morning, knew that it was *very* early, because

“The Throstle had not been
 Gathering worms upon the green.”

And in these two short quotations we learn several interesting facts connected with the natural history of this bird. Thus Browne tells us that it feeds upon worms, and gets up early in the morning, while the grass is

moist with dew, to catch them. You know there is an old proverb which says "the early bird catches the worm," indicating that those who wish to thrive must be industrious, and not lie abed too long. From Burns we learn that the Mavis wild (that is, shy, loving to hide in the hedges and bushes), with many a note (that is, with a full rich song, having in it many changes and modulations), sings drowsy day to rest (that is, sings late into the evening, as we have all heard it, as though it were chanting a lullaby to the day, and inviting all nature to repose). See now how much may be learned from the poets, if they are true poets, and have studied the wonderful works of God.

Of Thrushes there are several species in this country. In what is called the genus *Turdus*, naturalists have placed the Blackbird, which we shall have to speak of presently; the Missel and Song Thrushes; the Fieldfare, a common bird with us in the winter; the Redwing, also common at that season; the Ring Ouzel, a migratory bird, pretty much confined to the mountainous districts; and the Variegated Thrush, of which only a specimen or two has been taken here. These Thrushes are all of them insectivorous and frugivorous birds—I have already explained what these terms mean; seeds they sometimes take, and also grain when much pressed by hunger. Large flocks of the commoner kinds may be seen in winter about the fields and farm-yards; hunting the hedges for berries, and picking up whatever is eatable. They generally contrive to keep themselves in pretty fair condition, and as they are large birds, and their flesh is very good, they are worth shooting; so that large

flocks are every year much thinned by the fowler's gun. Nor is this wanton cruelty ; God has given these and all creatures for man's use, and he is quite justified in killing them if it be to answer a beneficial end.

Like the Missel Thrush, the Throstle is an early breeder, and it has usually two broods in the year. The nest is frequently placed in the centre of an evergreen shrub, bush, or thick tree, such as the holly or fir ; it is formed externally of moss and root fibres ; over the interior is spread a fine even layer of cow-dung or mud, and rotten wood, forming a cement which is impervious to wet ; on this the eggs are placed ; they are usually four or five in number, of a pretty light greenish-blue colour, largely spotted with black or very dark brown ; in length about an inch, in breadth nine twelfths of an inch. The Thrush has been known to build in an open shed or tool-house, and other exposed situations, but generally it takes good care to place its nest well out of reach, and hidden from prying eyes. Pity that so frequently its effects at concealment are unavailing.

“ Within a thick and spreading hawthorn bush
That overhung a mole-hill large and round,
I heard, from morn to morn, a merry Thrush
Sing hymns to sunrise, while I drank the sound
With joy :—and often, an intruding guest,
I watch'd her secret toils from day to day,
How true she warp'd the moss to form her nest,
And model'd it within with wood and clay.
And by and by, like heath-bells gilt with dew,
There lay her shining eggs as bright as flowers,
Ink-spotted-over shells of green and blue,
And there I witness'd in the summer hours
A brood of Nature's minstrels chirp and fly,
Glad as the sunshine and the laughing sky.”—CLARE.

BLACKBIRD.

BLACK THRUSH. OUZEL. GARDEN OUZEL. MERLE.

FIGURE 11.



HE haunts and habits of the Blackbird are much the same as those of the Thrush ; it is a shy bird, and much more frequently heard than seen. From early dawn to evening twilight does its loud, clear, mellow song float over the landscape, and now and then we just catch a glimpse of its glossy black plumes and golden bill, as it flirts from hedge to hedge, or passes from one leafy covert to another. We do not often see more than a single bird at the time, although most probably its mate is near at hand. This habit of singing and flying solitary is supposed to have gained for the bird the name Merle, by which it was once commonly known in this country, and also its scientific designation — *Turdus merula*, from *mera*, Latin, which sometimes signifies the same as *solus*—alone. Those writers who call the Thrush a Mavis, almost invariably call the Blackbird a Merle. You will recollect that the forester, in Scott's 'Lady of the Lake,' sings—

“Merry it is in the good green wood,
When the *Mavis* and *Merle* are singing.

Shakspeare gives us a variation of the term Ouzel as applied to this bird, describing it as

"The *Woosel-cock*, so black of hue,
With orange tawny bill."

And by Drayton, another old English poet, we are told that

"On his dulcet pipe the *Merle* doth ever play."

The Blackbird is especially fond of cherries and other fruits, therefore does the gardener wage war against him, without taking into account the immense number of worms, slugs, snails, and insects which he destroys; he must do at least as much good as mischief, and should, therefore, for the sake of his sweet song, be allowed to live and enjoy himself in his own way.

The centre of a thick bush is the place usually chosen for the *Merle's* nest; it is formed on the outside of coarse roots and strong bents of grass, plastered over inside with mud, and lined with fine grass-stalks and the hair, sometimes leaves. The eggs are four or five in number, now and then, but very rarely, six; the ground colour is usually light blue, not unlike the eggs of the Thrush, but the spots and freckles are of a pale reddish brown: at times the eggs are found without these altogether, and at others the markings are very faint indeed: there are two broods, the first being generally hatched at the end of March or beginning of April. In the year 1837, according to Mr. Blythe, a pair of these birds built four successive nests on an island in St. James's Park, London, and reared seventeen young ones.

Did my readers ever hear tell of a White Blackbird? Such a curiosity has been seen more than once, twice, or thrice. Albinos, as they are sometimes called, from

the Latin *Albus*, white, are not so very uncommon. Hear what a beautiful song James Montgomery sings to the Blackbird :

Golden Bill ! Golden Bill !

Lo ! the peep of day ;
All the air is cool and still,
From the elm tree on the hill,

Chant away :

While the moon drops down the west,
Like thy mate upon her nest,
And the stars before the sun
Melt, like snow-flakes, one by one,
Let thy loud and welcome lay

Pour along

Few notes, but strong.

Jet-bright wing ! jet-bright wing !
Flit across the sunset glade ;
Lying there in wait to sing,
Listen with thy head awry,
Keeping tune with twinkling eye,
While from all the woodland glade,
Birds of every plume and note

Strain the throat,

Till both hill and valley ring,
And the warbled minstrelsy,
Ebbing, flowing, like the sea,
Claims brief interludes for thee :
Then with simple swell and fall,
Breaking beautiful through all,
Let thy Pan-like pipe repeat,

Few notes, but sweet !



RING OUZEL.

ROCK OUZEL. TOR OUZEL. MOUNTAIN OUZEL. MOUNTAIN
BLACKBIRD. MOOR BLACKBIRD. WHITE-BREASTED
BLACKBIRD. RINGED THRUSH, OR BLACKBIRD.

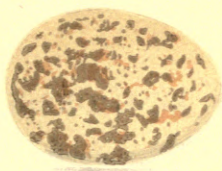
FIGURE 12.



WE have here a good many names with but little variety of meaning; they all have reference either to the bird's place of abode—the wide, wild moor and the rocky mountain, or to the marks on its plumage, which are very distinct and unmistakeable. The French call the bird *Merle à plastron blanc*—the Merle, or blackbird, with the white breastplate; the term Ouzel also comes from that language, being in old French, according to an authority, named Nares, *Oisel*, which strikes us as very like *Oiseau*, the French for bird. *Turdus torquatus* is the scientific name of the Ring Ouzel, *torquatus* meaning one that wears a collar or chain. A naturalist named Hewitson says this bird sings sweetly, and Selby says clearly and powerfully, though the notes are few. With us it is a summer visitant only, and to be found but in certain parts of the country.

It builds a nest much like that of the Blackbird, which has been found under the shelter of a furze or juniper bush, on the face of a rough bank, and among fragments of rock. It lays from four to six eggs, of a pale bluish green, freckled over with pale brown; they are about an inch long, and ten twelfths broad.

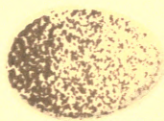
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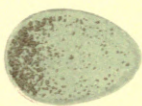
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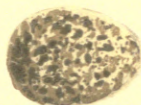
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DUNNOCK.

HEDGE SPARROW. HEDGE CREEPER. HEDGE CHANTER.
DICK DUNNOCK. SHUTTLE-WING.

FIGURE 13.



THIS is a brisk, lively little bird, something like the Wren, and almost as well known ; it is called in scientific language *Accentor modularis*, the meaning of which we need scarcely explain, the terms being so much like English words, as to convey their own signification. The Alpine Accentor, or Chanter, sometimes called the Collared Starling, and this bird are placed in a genus by themselves, by one of the British naturalists named Macgillivray. A genus in natural history, you should understand, is a distinct group of animals which have certain characteristics alike, and are therefore placed together for convenience. A genus may contain two distinct species, like this *Accentor* genus, or a dozen. The plural of genus is *genera* ; it is a Latin phrase, and means literally a race or family. The first scientific name which we see attached to a bird or other classified object in nature is the *generic* name, because it indicates the genus to which it belongs ; the second is the *specific* name, that is, belonging to the species only. Try and remember this. We need not trouble you just now with orders and classes, they will come by-and-bye, in another book, perhaps. Now for an exercise. To what species

of bird do those five light, greenish-blue eggs belong? they are without spot or freckle, rather pointed in shape, nine or ten twelfths of an inch long, by seven twelfths broad; the nest which contains them is rather large for a small bird; it is formed of moss, fine roots, and wool, lined with hair, and placed in the lower part of an almost leafless hedge, where it can be easily seen and come at? Why, the Hedge Sparrow's. Ah! to be sure, every school-boy knows that. And on every string of eggs hung up in the cottage, or play-room, you will find such numbers of these pretty little blue ones, that the wonder is that there are any sweet Hedge Warblers left to sing to us. Well, but to what *genus* does the bird belong? You have just told us the *Accentor genus*. True, but you must not be surprised if, when you take in hand a large natural history, you find some other generic name, such as *Motacilla*, going before *modularis*, for different naturalists have their different methods of arrangement—more's the pity—and sadly they puzzle the student sometimes to find out the proper place of a bird, in their widely-differing systems.

But we are forgetting our friend the Shuffle-wing, so called from a peculiar habit which he has of shaking his wings while singing his clear and pleasantly modulated song. It is in the nest of this bird, which is sometimes called the Titling, that the Cuckoo often deposits his single egg, and leaves its young to be brought up. The little monster soon outgrows the young Sparrows, and sometimes even turns them out of the nest, greatly to the astonishment and fear of the mother bird, whose utmost powers are taxed to supply

her voracious foster-child with enough food. It has even been asserted by an ancient author named Aristotle, that the young Cuckoo eventually eats its kind protector up; but this cannot be true, although given countenance to by Shakspeare, who makes the fool in the play of "King Lear" say, in allusion to the king's ungrateful daughters,—


"The Hedge Sparrow fed the Cuckoo so long
That she had her head bit off by her young."



REDBREAST.

ROBIN. ROBINET. RUDDOCK.

FIGURE 14.

N all countries where this bird is known, and there are few where he is not, he is distinguished by some familiar term of endearment. Thus, in Sweden they call him *Tommi-Liden*; in Norway, *Peter Ronsmed*; in Germany, *Thomas Guidito*. Bob and Bobby are common names for him in this country, and with old and young, rich and poor, he is a prime favourite. Our great poet Wordsworth has addressed him in these lines:—

“Thou art the bird whom man loves best,
 The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
 Our little English Robin!
 The bird that comes about our doors
 When autumn winds are sobbing!
 Thou art the Peter of Norway boors!
 Their Thomas in Finland,
 And Russia far inland!
 The bird, which by some name or other,
 All men who know thee call thee brother.”

Except the Nightingale and Skylark, there is no bird which the poets have so much delighted to honour as this; and in the memory of childhood it is associated with all that is gentle and kind; for is it not said in

that beautiful and pathetic ballad, "The Children in the Wood," that—

"No burial these pretty babes
Of any man receives;
But Robin Redbreast painfully,

that is, carefully—tenderly—

Did cover them with leaves."

Yes, the spruce Robinet—the cheerful Ruddock—is a welcome visitor everywhere; and in the dreary winter time he makes himself quite at home by many a country window-sill, and even fireside; and warbles his short sweet song, as though he were grateful for the daily dole of crumbs, and the kind words which he is sure to receive. William Howitt tells us that when he was in Winchester he saw, amid the deserted cloisters of Wyckham's College, a Robin which the porter told him was the chapel bird that regularly attended Divine Service—a pious bird indeed!

But if we were to enter upon the anecdotal part of Robinet's history, there is no telling when we should end; so we had better not begin. Now, what do our young readers think the naturalists call this simple little bird? They will never guess, so we will tell them:—*Motacilla*, or *Sylvia*, or *Erithacus rubecula*; the first three being generic names, and the last specific—distinguishing the particular species; it comes from the Latin *rubra*, meaning red. The French call the bird *Bec-fin Rouge-gorge*—Sharp-beak, Red-throat; and the Germans, *Das Rothkehlchen*. So that our Robin is not without high-sounding titles; enough to make him

proud, one would think ! And a proud bird he is too, and quarrelsome withal, if the truth must be told—a very Turk among his kind : two male Robins seldom meet without fighting, and their contests are often fierce and bloody.

The nest of the Robin is generally placed under a hedge, or bush, or tuft of herbage, on the ground ; sometimes in a mossy bank, or grassy knoll, and it has been found in a deserted mole-hill. It is related in Mr. Yarrell's ' History of British Birds ' that one of these nests was built in a small saw-pit, and that the female continued to sit, although the sawing of timber went on every day during the hatching of the eggs, and rearing the young. Another pair of Robins, as stated in the ' Field Naturalist's Magazine,' built three successive nests in a cottage which adjoined a noisy blacksmith's shop, and which, although not actually inhabited, was used as a kind of storehouse, and constantly visited. First, they chose a child's covered cart, which was hanging on a peg over the fire-place ; then a shelf on the opposite side of the room, close to an old mouse-trap ; and then another shelf in a different corner, where there was a bundle of papers. Many persons visited these nests out of curiosity, but did not alarm the old birds, which flew in and out to feed their young through an open window-frame.

The Robin breeds early in the spring ; its nest is rather bulky, being formed of moss, dead leaves, and dry grass, and lined with hair, and sometimes a few feathers. The eggs are from five to seven in number, spotted with pale reddish brown, which sometimes has

a purple tinge on a white ground. They are of a regular oval form, nine and a half twelfths of an inch long, by seven and a half broad. The poet of Dartmoor, Carrington, thus addresses the Robin—

Sweet bird of autumn, silent is the song
Of earth and sky, that in the summer hour
Rang joyously, and thou alone art left
Sole minstrel of the dull and sinking year.
But trust me, warbler, lovelier lay than this,
Which now thou pourest to the chilly eve,
The joy-inspiring summer never knew.
The very children love to hear thy tale,
And talk of thee in many a legend wild,
And bless thee for those touching notes of thine!



REDSTART.

REDTAIL. FIRETAIL.

FIGURE 15.



ACCORDING to Macgillivray, we have in this country two species of Redstarts, besides the one above named, which he calls the White-fronted Redstart; the others are the Blue-throated and the Black-breasted, or Tithy's Redstart: the former is often called the Blue-throated Warbler. These are both uncommon birds with us, while the Red, or Firetail, as it is sometimes termed, on account of the orange tint of the tail, is by no means so. It is a lively bird, and a sweet songster, possessing great imitative powers. Its Latin name is *Motacilla* or *Sylvia phœnicurus*: the first generic name signifying a Wagtail, the second having reference to a wood; and the specific term being that used by the old natural historian Pliny, to denote, as it is supposed, a bird of this kind.

The Common Redstart is a migratory bird, arriving in this country from the middle to the end of April, and leaving in October. Its nest, which is composed of fibrous roots and moss, and plentifully lined with hairs, is frequently placed in a hole or chink of an old wall, sometimes in a hollow tree, or behind a branch nailed against a wall: it has been discovered in a hole in the ground. The eggs are of a uniform bluish-green colour, very like those of the Hedge Sparrow; than

which, however, they are somewhat smaller, being nine twelfths of an inch in length, by six twelfths in breadth; they vary in number from four to seven, sometimes eight.

The lively Redstart strains his little throat,
Perch'd on an orchard tree throughout the day;
When downy seeds upon the breezes float,
And withered leaves begin to strew the way;
And although bright the sunny beams that play
Upon the landscape, yet all things denote
The glory of the year hath pass'd away:
And there he warbles out his farewell note.
Soon will his desultory song be heard
In times more bright and balmier than ours;
The cold, ungenial north suits not this bird,
And so he journeys to a land where bowers
Are ever green, to visit us again
When the sweet smile of April lights the plain.



STONECHAT.

STONESMICH, OR SMITH. STONECHATTER. STONECHINK.
BLACK CAP. MOOR TITLING. BLACKY-TOP.



MOTACILLA, or *Sylvia rubicola*, is the scientific name of this bird. Our readers need not to be again told the meaning of the generic terms, and the derivation of *rubicola* appears to be from *rubus*, a bramble, and *colo*, to inhabit. No part of the Stonechat's plumage is decidedly red, but the breast, and the edging of the wings, and the tail, having a rusty tinge, impart a reddish hue to the whole figure of the bird, which Macgillivray calls the Black-headed Bushchat; the French name for it is *Le Traquet*—a mill clapper; from this, and his popular English names, we may safely conclude that he is a noisy fellow—a chatterer! as indeed he is; jerking himself about among the whin and gorse bushes, beneath which, in juniper or other low shrubs, his nest is generally made. He fills the lonely places which he frequents with his sharp broken notes, like the syllables *snack*, *chat*, or *chit*.

This bird appears to be but a partial migrant, for, although many leave the country in the autumn, yet some are to be found here the whole winter through. It builds a large nest for its size, of grass and moss, lined with finer grass, fibrous roots, hair, and wool.

The eggs are of a light greenish-blue colour, marked toward the larger end with spots of pale brown: the number is five or six; the size, eight twelfths and a half long, by seven twelfths broad.

Shy bird of the common, that makest thy home
In the furze bush, all spangled with blossoms of gold,
Where seldom the wandering citizens come,
Or rustics approach, thy retreat to behold.

Thou singest thy song in the wilderness wild,
To the burrowing rabbit, and lonely *Pee-wheet*;
Like a hermit, no more by youth's feelings beguiled,
Who knoweth the pleasures of life are a cheat.



WHINCHAT.

FURZECCHAT. WHIN BUSHCHAT. GRASSCHAT.

FIGURE 17.



THIS the French call *Le Grand Traquet*, as if he were indeed something like a chatterer! That other made a noise like a mill clapper, but this! oh, this resembles a great mill clapper!! and yet we cannot learn that he makes a greater noise than his congener, as a bird of the same genus would be called. On the contrary, he seems the more quiet of the two—his sharp cry not being so frequently heard, and his song being more soft and agreeable. In their general habits and modes of life these two Chats are very similar, but the one which we are now noticing appears to be altogether migratory, none remaining in this country during the winter. It builds a nest of much the same materials as the Stonechat; places it also upon the ground; and lays in it five or six bluish-green eggs, sometimes marked with reddish-brown spots, but more frequently quite plain; size, eight twelfths and a half long, by six and a half broad.

The scientific name of this species is *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia rubetra*; in Latin the word *rubetra* signifies a toad of a red colour that keeps about bushes; and the marks on the head of the Whinchat, bearing some re-

semblance to those on the skin of that animal, gave rise to this specific name.

This bird and the Stonechat feed chiefly on beetles and other insects. Bishop Mant tells us, in his description of the month of April—


“ How in wild moor, or sterile heath,
Bright with the golden furze, beneath
O’erhanging bush or shelving stone,
The little Stonechat dwells alone,
Or near his brother of the Whin ;
Among the foremost to begin
His pretty love-song’s tinkling sound,
And nest low seated on the ground ;—
Not heedless of the winding pass,
That leads him through the secret *grass*.”



WHEATEAR.

WHITERUMP. WHITETAIL. STONECHAT. STONECHACK.
FALLOWSNATCH. FALLOWCHAT. SNORTER. ENG-
LISH ORTOLAN.

FIGURE 18.

 ONE of the popular names of this bird, we see, is the same as that which properly belongs to the species just described—the Stonechat; and, indeed, Macgillivray calls this bird, which is distinguished by the scientific title *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia œnanthe*, the White-rumped Stonechat. Yarrell, and most other naturalists, however, term it the Wheatear, and that is the name by which it is generally known. It has more white about its plumage than the other Chats, which in habits and general conformation it greatly resembles.

It is said to be the earliest of our summer visitors, generally arriving about the middle of March, and has been seen in the country as late as November 17th, at which date Mr. Sweet observed a pair near a gravel-pit in Hyde Park, flying about in pursuit of insects—the chief food of this bird. Sandy downs, chalk- and gravel-pits, and stony slopes, and such places where there are plenty of holes for building in, are chiefly resorted to by the Wheatear, which is sometimes called the Fallow

Finch, because it frequents lands which lie fallow, or uncultivated.

The nest of this species is often hidden deep in sandy banks or chalky cavities, sometimes in rabbit-burrows; it is composed of grass, roots, and moss, with a lining of hair, wool, and feathers. The eggs are from four to seven in number, pale greenish-blue, ten twelfths of an inch long, seven twelfths broad. Bishop Mant, whose lines we have quoted on the former page, also alludes to this bird, saying :

“ In the wild rabbit’s haunt, or field,
Where the brown fallow, newly tilled,
The reptiles ’mid the crumbling soil
Upturns, or flies, his favourite spoil,
Fain would I see the Wheatear show,
In the dark sward, his rump of snow,
Of spotless brightness.”



SEDGE WARBLER.

SEDGE BIRD. SEDGE WREN. SEDGE REEDLING.

FIGURE 19.



NATURALISTS call this pretty little bird *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia salicaria*, from *salix*, a willow, because it is usually found in moist marshy places, where willow trees best flourish; here, too, grow the sedges and rushes, amid which it loves to sport and build, and hence the popular names of the bird. Another scientific name for it is *Salicaria phragmitis*, from the Latin *Phragmitis*, a reed or cane; so the French say *Bec-fin Phragmite*, when speaking of the sprightly Reedling—not an uncommon bird in the marshy districts of this country, although but little known to people generally, on account of its retired habits. It is a summer visitor only, arriving in April and leaving again in September.

Like most of the true Warblers it is insectivorous, and the tall aquatic plants are its game preserves; there it finds in abundance sprawling water-beetles and spiders, and dancing gnats, and dragon-flies, gleaming in the sun like winged emeralds, and feeds away right merrily; there it places on the ground its large, loosely-constructed nest of moss and coarse grass, lined with finer grass, and perhaps a little hair intermixed, within which are placed five or six eggs, of a greenish, or

yellowish white, spotted or freckled with light brown. The young are hatched towards the end of May, or beginning of June. Brown and dingy white are the prevailing colours of the plumage of this bird, which is a sweet songster, singing all day long, and easily urged into song, if, when it chances to be silent, a stone is thrown at it! Its singing is very singular, as it sounds forth from the reedy waters late at night, when hundreds of voices seem sometimes joining in concert; and the traveller, at that lone hour, listens with wonder and pleasure to the strange tones.



REED WARBLER.

REED WREN. MARSH REEDLING.

FIGURE 20.



OTACILLA, or *Sylvia arundinacea*, is the title assigned to this bird in the lists of most naturalists, and the reason of the generic term will be at once perceived when we state that *arundo* in Latin means a reed or cane. The places of resort, habits, and general appearance of this bird are so similar to those of the Sedge Warbler, that the two are generally confounded. The nest, however, affords an obvious mark of distinction, being, in this species, generally somewhat elevated above the ground, and supported by the stalks of the reeds or rushes around which it is woven. It is rather a deep structure, somewhat in the form of an inverted cone, or, to be plainer, a sugar-loaf turned upside down, only not so long in proportion to its breadth as that. It is sometimes built so close to the river, that at every flow of the tide the water covers the ground beneath it, and there it hangs, swayed to and fro by the gale which whistles amidst the sedges around, and waves about their long streamer-like leaves—as pretty a sight as the eye need wish to see, especially if there should be four or five little cheepers peeping over the edges, and saying, as well as they are able, “give, give!” while the old birds flit in and out of the reedy forest, bringing food, and at times stopping

to pour out the low sweet warble peculiarly their own, or to imitate the notes of some other bird that chances to be singing near at hand. Often is this warble heard in calm, clear summer nights, hence the term Night Warbler has been applied to the bird. When it ceases to sing, should any one be desirous to hear it again, a stone thrown into the lurking-place of the songster will generally attain the desired object. *Bec-fin des Roseaux* is the French name for this bird, *des Roseaux* meaning of the reeds.

Its nest is composed of the same materials as that of the Sedge Warbler, and the eggs are about the same in number and size ; that is, eight twelfths of an inch long by six twelfths in breadth, of a greenish-white colour, spotted with ash-green and light brown. The following descriptive lines will suit equally well for either bird :—

Where rushes hide the stagnant pool, or fringe the gliding stream,
And in the sunshine dragon-flies, like winged jewels gleam ;
Where on the borders of the marsh, the stunted hawthorns grow,
And thrift, and wild sea-lavender shed o'er a purple glow ;
Where alders tremulously stand, and osier twigs are seen
To dance unto the singing breeze, like fairies clad in green ;
Where drooping willows kiss the wave, and whistling reeds in ranks,
Incline their velvet heads unto the shores, and shelving banks ;
Where dives the sullen water rat ; where leaps the speckled frog ;
And flies and widges gaily sport above the quaking bog ;—
'Tis there the blithe Sedge Warbler dwells, and there his nest he builds,
In rushy tuft, or whatsoe'er the needful shelter yields ;
'Tis there he singeth constantly, a sweet, though scarce-heard song,
When skies are beautifully blue, and summer days are long,
And sometimes in the misty morn, and sometimes in the night,
He chanteth out right merrily, to show his heart is light :

He glanceth 'twixt the bending reeds, he skimmeth o'er the tide,
And many a snug retreat is there, his form from foes to hide;
Some weal, come woe, his constant mate still sitteth on her nest,
And food is plentiful, that he may pick and choose the best;
And for his rising family he hath no anxious cares,
Like men, that know the world is full of pitfalls and of snares,
With fears, that truly prophesy, his heart is never stirred;
He is unconscious of all these—oh, happy, happy bird!



NIGHTINGALE.

FIGURE 21.

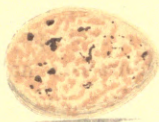


WE are almost afraid to begin about the Nightingale, lest we should never leave off again, the subject being one which a real lover of birds can scarcely treat of in plain prose, or in a limited space. Singular to say, this chief of feathered songsters has but one common name, at least in this country, where it is universally called the Nightingale—the name being composed of two Saxon words, signifying night and to sing. My readers are not, however, to imagine that because they hear this bird spoken of as the bird of night, the songster of the night, and so on, that it only sings during the silent hours usually devoted to sleep; its melodious song may be constantly heard in the daytime, from April, when it arrives in this country, to the beginning of June, when it usually becomes silent, or

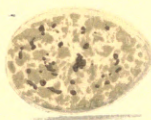
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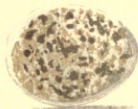
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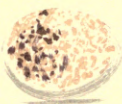
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utters only an occasional hoarse kind of croak, which is supposed to be a warning of approaching danger to its mate or young. The Nightingale is frequently alluded to by the poets under the name of Philomel, and this may be called the classical name of the bird, because it is taken from Ovid, a Latin poet, who tells a story about a human being who was metamorphosed, or changed, into this sweet songster, which is more poetical than probable. However, some naturalists have adopted the name, and say *Philomela luscinia*, and the only explanation of the latter term we can give is, that *luscinia*, in Latin, means a Nightingale. *Motacilla*, *Sylvia*, and *Curruca* are also generic names applied by naturalists to this bird, which is called, in French, *Bec-fin Rossignol*, the latter term having no other meaning, that we are aware of, than Nightingale.

Such of my readers as have not yet heard the music of this delightful songster, have indeed a treat in store. We wonder not that old Isaak Walton should have exclaimed, when listening to its rich burst of harmony, "Lord! what music hast Thou provided for the saints in heaven, when Thou givest bad men such music on earth?"

The chief haunts of the Nightingale are copses, shrubberies, and thick hedge-rows, where it can be well screened from view. It delights to be in the neighbourhood of running streams, as it there finds the greatest abundance of insect food: it returns year after year to the same spot, and delights the same ears with its melodious song. Shame that so frequently the trap and snare should deprive a whole neighbourhood of this

gratification; but so it is—the bird is easily caught, and there are those who make a business of capturing the sweet songster and consigning it to a prison for life.

The nest of the Nightingale, as Mr. Morris tells us, “is almost always placed on the ground, in some natural hollow, amongst the roots of a tree, on a bank, or at the foot of a hedge-row, though sometimes two or three feet from the surface; it is very loosely put together, and is formed of various materials, such as dried stalks of grasses, and leaves, small fibrous roots, and bits of bark, lined with a few hairs and the finer portions of the grass. It is about five inches and a half in external diameter, by about three internally; and is about three and a half inches deep.”

The eggs, which are laid in May, are rather large for the size of the bird, being nine and a half twelfths of an inch long, by seven twelfths broad. They are four, five, or six in number, of a regular oval form, and usually of an uniform glossy dull olive-brown colour; sometimes they are tinged with greyish blue, and some have more or less of green prevailing in the ground colour, or mottling the surface. The young birds are hatched in June, and are frequently seen hopping about the ground in the neighbourhood of the nest long before they are able to fly. The poet Clare has so faithfully and beautifully described the haunt and nest of the Nightingale, that we are tempted to make a long extract.

“Up this green woodland ride let’s softly rove
And list the Nightingale—she dwells just here,

Hush! let the wood gate softly clap for fear
The noise might drive her from her home of love.

* * * * *

We will not plunder music of its dower,
Nor turn this spot of happiness to thrall,
For melody seems hid in every flower
That blossoms near thy home. These harebells all
Seem bowing with the beautiful in song:
And gaping cuckoo-flower, with spotted leaves,
Seems blushing of the singing it has heard.
How curious is the nest; no other bird
Uses such loose materials: dead oaken leaves
Are placed without, and velvet moss within,
And little scraps of grass, and scant and spare,
What scarcely seem materials, down and hair;
For from men's haunts she nothing seems to win.
Yet nature is the builder, and contrives
Homes for her children's comfort, even here,
Where solitude's disciples spend their lives
Unseen, save when a wanderer passes near
That loves such pleasant places. Deep adown
The nest is made, a hermit's mossy cell:
Snug lie her curious eggs, in number five,
Of deadened green, or rather olive brown;
And the old prickly thorn bush guards them well.
So here we'll leave them, still unknown to wrong,
As the old woodlands' legacy of song."



BLACKCAP.

BLACKCAP WARBLER. MOCK NIGHTINGALE.

FIGURE 22.



SCIENTIFIC name, *Motacilla* or *Sylvia atricapilla*, from *ater*, black; and *capillus*, the hair of the head. We know an old gentleman, who wears a short, crisp, round, black wig, whom we never look at without being reminded of the Blackcap; he has such a sharp knowing look, just like the bird has; we never heard him sing, so we cannot tell what his musical powers may be, but if they are anything like those of the Mock Nightingale, it would be worth going some distance to listen to him; for this bird is, next to the real Nightingale, the sweetest songster of the woodland choir, or, if not of the whole choir, the sweetest of the warbler family.

The question may here arise in the minds of our readers—are not all song birds warblers? If we take the common meaning of the term warble, which is to sing—to utter musically, undoubtedly they are; but when we speak of warblers in natural history, we mean a certain order or family of song birds, which have certain common characteristics, and are therefore grouped together under the generic term *Sylviadæ*. A very interesting account of this *Sylvia* genus has been written by Mr. Sweet, who paid great attention to their habits

and capabilities, especially in a state of confinement. These are all what are called soft-billed or insect-eating birds—the most difficult of any to rear and preserve in health; they are all more or less gifted with musical powers, and therefore worth having considerable pains bestowed upon them. Let it be understood then that when we speak of warblers, we mean birds of this genus, *Sylvia*.

The Blackcap, which the French naturalist, Buffon, calls *Fauvette à tête noir*—the favourite with the black head—generally arrives in this country about the middle of April, and leaves again in September: some few, it appears, remain through the winter. It is a bird of shy and retired habits, haunting much the same spots as the Nightingale, although it is not so local in its distribution as that bird, that is, it is more widely and generally distributed.

The nest, which is built about the end of May or beginning of June, is made of dry grass and small fibrous roots, with sometimes a little hair and moss; spiders' web and wool are also occasionally used by the bird to make up his structure, which is a tolerably neat one; it is usually lined with hair, and placed in a bramble or other bush, about two or three feet from the ground; often in a currant or raspberry bush, of the fruit of which the bird is very fond. The eggs are usually four or five in number, of a pale greenish white, mottled with light brown and grey, with a few spots and streaks of dark brown. They have been found of a beautiful flesh or salmon-colour: the size varies considerably.

The Blackcap she builds in the raspberry bush,
 And a snug little nest she makes ;
 And sweetly her mate singeth near her—hush !
 To those musical trills and shakes !
 He has caught from the Blackbird his rich mellow tone,
 From the Skylark the melody shrill ;
 And the notes of the Woodlark, the Thrush, and his own,
 He varies and blends at will.



GARDEN WARBLER.

FAUVETTE. GARDEN FAUVET. GREATER PETTYCHAPS.
 NETTLE-CREEPER.

FIGURE 23.



SCIENTIFIC name, *Motacilla* or *Sylvia hortensis*, from *Hortus*, a garden or orchard, such places being the chief haunts of this sweet warbler, whose musical powers are nearly equal to those of the Blackcap. It is a small plain bird of retiring habits, and therefore attracts but little attention. It may be found by those who search for it, in the groves, gardens, thickets, and plantations all through the country, from the end of April to the end of August.

Its nest is loosely constructed of coarse grass, sometimes intermixed with wool and moss, and lined with fine fibrous roots and hairs. The German naturalist

Bechstein says, that in his country, the opening of the nest has a border of spiders' web, or silk from the cocoon of some insect; and Mr. Morris states that these substances are used here to attach the structure to the branches amid which it is built. The bird sometimes builds on the ground, among tall grass or nettles, hence the name Nettle-creeper; sometimes in a thick low bush, or among ivy stems against a wall, in which situation Mr. Jesse observed a pair of these birds to build three times in succession. The eggs are from four to six in number, nine twelfths of an inch long, by six and a half broad; the colour a dull greenish white, dotted with light brown and grey.

The Garden Warbler generally rears two broods in a season; it lives chiefly on insects and worms, and soft pulpy fruit like cherries, of which it is extremely fond.



WHITETHROAT.

GREATER WHITETHROAT. PEGGY WHITETHROAT. NETTLE-CREEPER. WHEY BEARD. WHEETIE-WHY. CHURR. MUFF. MUFFIT. MUFTIE. CHARLIE MUFFTIE. BEARDIE. WHEATIE. WHISKEY. BLETHERING TAM.

FIGURE 24.



THERE is a choice of names, many of them more expressive than elegant. We cannot doubt by the sound of some of them that the bird is well known in Scotland, as it appears to be throughout nearly the whole of Britain. It is perhaps the commonest of the Warblers, and is called by naturalists *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia cinerea*, from the prevailing tint of the plumage; *cinerea*, in Latin, signifying ash-coloured. The Whitethroat, which arrives in this country in April, and leaves it in September, frequents hedges, the outskirts of plantations, and borders of woods, and any grounds where there are thickets and brushwood, amid which it likes to build.

Its nest is wide, and loosely, yet strongly made, of dry grass-stalks and other plants, and lined with fine grass and hair. The eggs are four or five in number, of a greenish white ground colour, with spots and

speckles of greenish grey and brown. Two, and sometimes three, broods are reared in a season. Although generally very careful to conceal its nest, the bird has been known to build in exposed situations, close to a public road, or an occupied dwelling. Mr. Jesse mentions one which built on a vine close to a window. Insects, worms, slugs, and soft fruit are the food of this bird, which Macgillivray calls the White-throated Warbler.



WOOD WARBLER, OR WREN.

YELLOW WARBLER. YELLOW WILLOW WREN. LARGER
WILLOW WREN. GREEN WREN. WILLIE MUFTIE.

FIGURE 25.

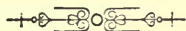


OTACILLA, or *Sylvia sylvicola* is the scientific name of this elegant and interesting bird, as Sweet well terms it: the generic name comes from the Latin words *Sylva*, a wood, and *colo*, to inhabit. The French call the bird *Bec-fin sifflear*, from *siffler*, to hiss, whistle, or warble. This is a more gaily-tinted bird than most of the Warblers, having a considerable quantity of yellow and green about its plumage. Its period of arrival in this country is from the middle of April to the middle of May, and of departure therefrom about the end of September. It is not a very uncommon bird, although there are some parts of the country where it is rarely or ever seen. It inhabits woods, thickets, and gardens, and seems to prefer the neighbourhood of trees of a large size.

It builds a domed nest of an oval shape, with a small hole in the side for entrance, neatly interwoven of grasses, leaves, and moss, and lined with fine grass and hair; it is generally placed on the ground, and well concealed by thick herbage. Mr. Sweet has found it in the stump of a tree. The eggs are six or seven in number; eight twelfths of an inch long, by six twelfths

broad. The ground colour is white, thickly spotted and speckled with purple, red, and grey.

This is entirely an insectivorous bird. It is very active, and has a sharp shrill cry, resembling *tzit-tzit!* hence some naturalists call it *Sylvia sibillatrix*, from the Latin *sibilo*, to hiss: hence, too, our English word sibilous.



WILLOW WARBLER, OR WREN.

GROUND WREN. HAY BIRD. HUCK-MUCK.

WILLIE MUFTIE.

FIGURE 26.



SCIENTIFIC name, *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia trochilus*, from *Sylva*, a wood, and *trochilus*, a

Wren. This is a somewhat commoner bird than the last, and is one of our earliest summer visitors, generally arriving about the second week in April. Its favourite places of resort are the borders of streams, where osiers, alders, and willows best flourish; it is also frequently found in gardens, and all kinds of thick bushy places, especially where insects, its chief food, are most abundant. It builds a large nest for its size, generally of a flattish oval form, but varying considerably in shape, according to the situation chosen. The

component materials are — outwardly, moss, fern, feathers, and grass ; inwardly, feathers and hair ; it is pretty closely woven, and the entrance is usually at the side.

The eggs, six or seven in number, are of a roundish form ; in length, seven lines and a half ; in breadth, six lines. The colour varies considerably, but is most commonly a pinkish white, with numerous small specks of pale rusty red. Purely white eggs have been met with in the nest of this bird, which is generally placed on the ground, and carefully concealed among long grass, brushwood, or rank weeds : it is often to be found in a bank, beneath a thick hedge, near a wood. The first brood of young are hatched by the end of May or the beginning of June ; the second early in August.



CHIFF CHAFF.

LESSER PETTYCHAPS. LEAST WILLOW WREN. CHIP-
CHOP. HAY BIRD. ARBOUR BIRD.

FIGURE 27.



HIS bird bears a very close resemblance to the Willow Warbler; it is however somewhat smaller, and the wings are more rounded; hence it is sometimes called the Short-winged Wood Wren, by which name Macgillivray distinguishes it. Its most common title is derived from its curious, but not unpleasing song, of *chiff-chaff*, *chivy-chavy*; which it utters while on the wing, in pursuit of insects—its principal food. Bechstein calls it the Arbour Bird, perhaps because it prefers to build in thick leafy places. The French naturalist, Temminck, terms it *Sylvia rufa*—one would think from *rufus*, red, but the bird has little or no tinge of that colour about its plumage. *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia hippolais* is the more common scientific name; the last word has been translated, “a bird called a Hedge Sparrow.” *Bec-fin veloce* is a French name for this bird, signifying swift—rapid.

The nest of the Chiff Chaff is very like that of the Willow Warbler, of an oval shape, with the entrance generally at the side. It is composed of various materials, but chiefly of dried grass, moss, and dead leaves, and lined with feathers. The eggs are commonly six

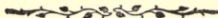
or seven in number ; seven twelfths of an inch long, by five and a half broad ; the ground colour is white, with very small dots and spots of purplish red or brown. There are sometimes two broods in the year.

“ Chiff-chaff! Chivy-chavy !”

What a funny little bird ;
Was there ever such a warble
In the woodland heard ?

“ Chiff-chaff! Chivy-chavy”


On the ear it comes again,
Faint and low, yet soft and pleasant
Is the gentle strain.



WREN

COMMON WREN. JENNY WREN. KITTY WREN. JIMPO.

FIGURE 28.

VERYBODY knows the poor little Jenny Wren, with her short cocked-up tail and sharp prying eyes ; in and out of the thicket she flits, up and down the garden walk, and over the old wall and back again, with surprising swiftness ; now picking a spider from the crevice ; now snatching a slug from the earth ; now feasting on seeds in the field ; and now on fruit in the orchard. She is here, and there, and everywhere, and she has a sweet song of her own, too, full and melodious, and astonishingly loud for such a little bird. Generally when on the wing, or hopping about from place to place, she utters a short sharp *chit-chit!* and have you ever seen her run up a tree? not straight like a Woodpecker, but twisting round it corkscrew fashion. Oh, she is a clever little climber, that Jenny Wren ; and she builds a nest big enough one would suppose for two or three families diminutive as hers ; large and round like a ball, with a hole on one side. It is made of almost anything that comes to hand—fern and moss, grass and small roots, twigs and hay are all pressed into the service for the outer materials, but for the lining feathers are used—soft and warm for the little Wrenlings to lie upon.

The situations chosen for building, vary as much as

the materials used ; sometimes it is a hole in the earth ; hence the scientific name of the bird, *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia troglodytes*, the last word being the name of a race of people who live in holes or caves ; sometimes it 's placed against the trunk of a tree at a considerable height from the ground ; sometimes under a bank ; and in any case where the nest is to be supported at the side or above, the portion to be attached to the supporting object is begun first, and the rest of the fabric traced out, as it were. Most birds build from the bottom of the nest, but the Wren, so Rennie tells us, sometimes departs from this rule, and seems to exercise a discretionary power which approaches very near to reason.

The following anecdote, taken from a very delightful book, called 'A Journal of a Naturalist,' by Knapp, will place the sagacity of a Wren in a yet stronger light :—"The bird had formed a hollow space in the thatch on the inside of my cow-shed, in which it had placed its nest by the side of a rafter, and finished it with its usual neatness ; but, lest the orifice of its cell should engage attention, it had negligently hung a piece of moss on the straw-work, concealing the entrance, and apparently proceeding from the rafter ; and so perfect was the deception, that I should not have noticed it, though tolerably observant of such things, had not the bird betrayed her secret by darting out."

To show what curious places the Wren sometimes chooses for her nest, we may mention that Bechstein speaks of one which he found in the sleeve of an old coat. The eggs of this bird are generally of a white

colour, dotted with light red ; eight twelfths of an inch long, six twelfths broad ; they are frequently as many as eight in number, and how this small bird could manage to feed such a company of young, has been a subject of surprise. An old naturalist named Ray ranks it among “ those daily miracles of which we take no notice.” Wrens remain in this country the whole year through, and in severe winters many of them perish. Bishop Mant, in his poetical description of the British months, speaks of

“ The quick note of the russet Wren,
Familiar to the haunts of men,
He quits in hollow'd wall his bow'r,
And thro' the winter's gloomy hour
Sings cheerily : nor yet hath lost
His blitheness, chill'd by pinching frost ;
Nor yet is forc'd for warmth to cleave
To cavern'd nook, or straw-built eave.
Sing, little bird ! Sing on, design'd
A lesson for our anxious kind ;
That we, like thee, with heart's content
Enjoy the blessings God hath sent ;
His bounty trust, perform his will,
Nor antedate uncertain ill !”

The poet Wordsworth tells us that—

“ Among the dwellings framed by birds
In field or forest, with nice care,
Is none that with the little Wren's
In snugness may compare.”



GOLDCREST.

GOLDEN-CRESTED, OR CROWNED WREN.

GOLDEN-CRESTED, OR CROWNED KINGLET. MARYGOLD
FINCH.

FIGURE 29.



HIS is the tiniest of British, and indeed of European birds, measuring not more than three inches and a half long, with the tail, which is about one inch and a quarter, so there is not much left for the body. Some naturalists call it *Regulus cristatus*, which is as much as to say, a little king with a crest; others *Motacilla*, or *Sylvia Regulus*; and others again, *Regulus auricapellus*, or *vulgaris*; *aurum* in Latin means gold, *vulgaris* common; and this understood, the reason of these terms will be evident.

The lovely little Goldcrest may be found all over this kingdom, and all the year through, but then he must be sought for generally in the dim woods and leafy thickets, where much of the bright sunshine cannot enter, and a pretty sight it is to see him darting about here and there in search of insects, his golden crest glittering like a speck of light. Sometimes he ventures out into the open heaths among the furze bushes, and now and then may be seen flitting among the rose trees and shrubs of the garden. His song, although very sweet, is low and weak; and his common call-note resembles the syllables *tzit, tzit*, uttered quickly; this is most frequently

heard towards sunset, as if he were warning his friends of the approach of night.

He makes the prettiest little round nest imaginable, of moss and lichens, willow-down, spiders' webs, wool, fine grass, and hair. I do not mean to say that he uses all these materials at once, but he does use whichever of them comes most readily to hand; and he weaves the nest very closely, and lines it with soft feathers, and hangs it like a cradle to be rocked to and fro by the wind, beneath the branch of a fir or some other tree, most usually choosing an evergreen, as he builds very early in the year, and would not find the necessary shelter in other kinds. And—would you think it?—the saucy little Goldcrest is a thief; he has been known to watch the Chaffinch, and slyly to abstract a portion of the materials which that careful builder had collected for its own habitation.

But of all the funny little eggs that ever were seen, the Goldcrests are the funniest; about as big as a good-sized pea, and often of the same shape; the colour is reddish, or brownish white of various shades; there may be four, five, six, seven, eight, aye, sometimes as many as ten of them; all snug and warm in the rocking nest. And when the young are hatched, has not the little Goldcrest a busy time of it then? Up and down, in and out they go, both father and mother, scarcely two minutes being suffered to elapse without one of them returning with a gnat, or a spider, or an ant's egg, or some such delicacy to that cradle full of noisy gaping bills.

And oh! what a courageous little bird is the Gold-

crest! J. T. Wilkinson, of Walsham Hall, Suffolk, relates that on one occasion, when he ascended a fir tree in his orchard, to look at a nest of this bird, the hen, which was sitting, defended her charge with the utmost firmness and resolution, pecking and flying at the intruder's hand until he withdrew it. The same authority speaks of a pair of these birds which built their nest near the drawing-room window, and sat fast and hatched their young, notwithstanding the noise of the piano and other interruptions to which they were subjected. A hen Golderest is also spoken of by Col. Montagu, which would feed her young in a room, even when the nest was taken in the hand; the bird went and returned with food about thirty-six times in the hour, and worked away at this rate sixteen hours a day. Here was prodigious labour for one little weak bird; here was prodigious destruction, too, of insect life. Let us see, thirty-six times sixteen make five hundred and seventy-six. Such an industrious worker deserves a song, and he shall have one.

'Mid the shadow of the pines, flitting here and there,
Lo! the Golden-crested Wren glanceth through the air,
Like a fiery meteor, or a shooting star,
The tiniest of creatures that in the forests are.

Never still a moment—whisking to and fro—
Now amid the topmost bough, now the roots below;
Now he perks his feathers up, now he twinkles his eye,
Now emits a warble low, now a short sharp cry.

Lo! the Golden-crested Wren, he's a happy bird,
Dwelling 'mid the solitude, where the boughs are stirred
By the gentle breezes, stealing in and out,
He their tuneful whispers understands, no doubt.

Soft and solemn music he hath ever near,
Like angelic voicings from a better sphere;
Kind and tender greetings from his wedded love,
And the gentle cooings of the Cushat Dove.

Hath he not the Magpie, and the laughing Jay,
And the playful Squirrel—all to make him gay?
Pleasant sights and perfumes—hath he not all these,
And bright gleams of sunshine, breaking through the trees?

As the tufted pine cones sporteth he among,
Cometh not the Wild-Bee murmuring a song,
Where around his dwelling, tassels all of gold,
Make it like a palace gorgeous to behold?

When the tempest riseth, and the winds roar loud,
And the haughty pine trees unto earth are bowed.
Lo! secure he lieth in his feathered nest,
Fearing nought of danger,—perfectly at rest.

Yes, he leads a pleasant life—doth the Crested Wren.
Far away from noisy town, and the haunts of men;
If no duties bound me—where I free to roam—
Gladly would I visit him, in his sylvan home.



GREAT TITMOUSE.

GREAT BLACK-HEADED TOMTIT. BLACK-CAP. OXEYE.
SIT-YE-DOWN.

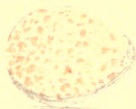
FIGURE 30.



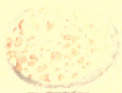
HIS bird may be termed the king of the genus *Parus*, or Tit family, of which we have several representatives in this country; it has sometimes been called the *Parus hortensis*, or Garden Tit, but to this distinction it is no more entitled than any other member of its family circle, as all the Tits are fond of seeds and buds, and therefore haunters of gardens. *Parus major*, the latter word signifying greater, is the scientific name applied by nearly all naturalists to the bird, which remains in this country all the year round. The name oxeeye, as well as Sit-ye-down, has reference, Mr. Morris conjectures, to its note bearing a supposed resemblance to these words; this is so loud, that it may be heard at the distance of half a mile; it has also been likened to the sharpening of a saw.

The Great Tit wears a dress of yellow, and black, and blue, and white, something like that of a harlequin, and his actions correspond; no bird is perhaps so full of antics and strange manœuvre; it is in a state of incessant activity, and in its search after insect food assumes all manner of extraordinary positions; now hanging with its head downwards, now all awry, twist-

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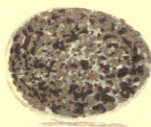
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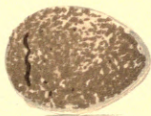
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ing and wriggling about like a winged snake, if there were such a thing, might be supposed to do. Up the trunk of the tree he runs, in and out among the branches, down the other side, peering into every hole and crevice; now dexterously extracting a spider from its cell, now a worm from the bud, and now a kernel from the nut; and now, to his shame be it spoken! with his strong sharp bill cracking the skull of some poor helpless little bird, and feasting on the brains of his victim.

The Great Tit is most frequently found in woods and thickets, near to gardens and cultivated lands; it is an early builder, and forms its nest of moss, feathers, leaves, and hair loosely put together; the place chosen is generally a hole in a tree or an old wall; sometimes the deserted nest of a Crow or Magpie is used; and the eggs, which vary in number from six to eleven, are of a pure white colour, irregularly spotted with reddish brown: they have been discovered, in a decayed tree, on the dust of the wood alone. This bird has been known to build in very curious places, such, for instance, as a pump, both used and unused, the place for exit and entrance being the orifice for the handle; far up among the rafters of a house; in a window-frame, the opening for the weight being the door-way; and in an inverted flower-pot.

The French call this bird *Grosse Mésange, ou Charbonnière*—the first word signifying great, the second Titmouse, the third collier, or coal merchant.

BLUE TIT.

BLUE CAP. BLUE BONNET. BLUE MOPE. NUN. TOMTIT.
BILLY-BITER. HICK-WALL.

FIGURE 31.



WHO that has been accustomed to traverse the English woodlands, or to wander the fields or roads near them, but has frequently paused to listen to the shrill *chicka, chicka, chicka, chee, chee*, of the *Parus cœruleus*, as naturalists generally agree to call the Blue Tit? and who that has caught a glimpse of the lively little bird, but has admired its beautiful plumage of cerulean tint, and agile movements, than which nothing can be more graceful and interesting. This is one of the commonest, as well as the prettiest of the Tit family. Everybody knows the little Tomtit, and everybody loves it, except the gardener, who looks upon it as his greatest enemy, because it has a habit of picking his buds to pieces—a bad habit certainly, but then Tom is looking for insects, many thousands of which he destroys, and thus prevents far more ravage and destruction in the garden than he himself commits.

The nest of the Blue Tit is composed of moss, grass, and wool, and lined with hair and feathers. The eggs are from six to ten or more in number; of a reddish white colour, irregularly spotted with light red; the size is seven twelfths of an inch long, by six twelfths broad. As many as eighteen eggs have been found in

the nest of this bird, which is generally placed in situations similar to those occupied by the species last described, and sometimes in even more curious places.

Speaking of one which built in the hollow of a pump, Bishop Stanley says, "It happened that during the time of building, and laying the eggs, the pump had not been in use; and when again set going the female was sitting; and it was naturally supposed that the motion of the handle would drive her away; the young brood, however, were hatched safely without any other misfortune than the loss of a part of the tail of the sitting bird, which was rubbed off by the friction of the pump handle."

Mr. Hewitson relates that once when out on an entomological, that is insect-hunting, excursion, he broke to pieces the decayed stump of a tree, within which a Blue Tit was sitting upon fourteen eggs, on which she remained immoveable until forcibly taken off. He also mentions a pair of these birds, which built their nest, hatched their eggs, and reared their young, ten in number, in an earthen bottle, through the neck of which, one inch in diameter, the birds had to pass in and out. The bottle was fifteen inches deep, and one is puzzled to imagine how the birds could manage to ascend through so narrow an aperture. The Irish naturalist, Thompson, mentions a similar case in an ornamental jar; and another is spoken of by Mr. Poole, in which the male bird used to feed the female, while sitting, through the neck of the jar. But the strangest place of all for this or any other bird to build in, was within the jaws of the skeleton of a man who

had been executed for murder, and was hung in chains : this was a grim kind of habitation truly ! but it had no terrors for the innocent birds.

When the nest of this bird is built in the trunk of a tree, great pains are taken by the little architect to hollow out first a convenient passage, and then an inner cavity for the nursery, and this is all as smoothly done as if by the hand of a skilful carpenter ; it is said, too, that the chips are not left in a heap, as they would naturally fall close to the spot, but are scattered about, and some even carried to a considerable distance. An instance of this kind is related by Mr. Saul, in the 'Zoologist,' that gentleman having watched the proceedings of a pair of Blue Tits while preparing the chamber for their young.

Nests of this bird, and others of similar habits, have been found in trees apparently sound when taken to the saw-pit to cut into planks : they must have been there a very long time, for the entrance passage to have grown up again, and become solid like the other wood. The Blue Tit frequently uses the same nest year after year ; it has been known to do so for twelve successive years : we wonder what rent he paid to the landlord.

If, as sometimes is the case, two broods are reared in the same year, different nests are said to be invariably used. This is a bird of quality, and must have his spring and autumn residences, forsooth !

LONG - TAILED TIT.

LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE, PIE, MAG, OR MUFFLIN. BOTTLE
TIT OR TOM. LONG TOM. LONG POD. MUM RUFFIN.
HUCK-MUCK. POKE PUDDING.

FIGURE 32.



BEAUTIFUL bird, with a great string of ugly names, longer than its tail, which tail is almost as long as its whole body, and distinguishes it from the rest of the Tit family. This caudal appendage has moreover been laid hold of by naturalists, who have found it a convenient handle, and so called the bird *Parus caudatus*, meaning, literally, the Tit that has a tail, as if other Tits had no tail at all, or none worth speaking of—a base libel this on the rest of the family.

The Muffin is in truth an extremely beautiful and interesting bird, with its snowy pate, throat, and breast, delicately shaded off into grey, with a faint red flush, which deepens as it spreads up the back, until it is lost in the glossy black of the neck, extending from thence on either side of the head to the bill in two broad streaks, that enclose the eye, and give the bird a peculiar quaint and knowing look. Black and white are the wings and tail, looking like rich velvet, embroidered and edged with silver. Oh, it is a *very* beautiful bird; and such a lively fellow too; his long tail seems no hindrance to him at all; but he whisks about as the other Tits do—just as if he had not one to carry. What he does with

it in that curious nest of his, shaped like a long bottle, one cannot imagine, unless he pokes it up through the hole near the top, which serves at once for door and window.

No other English bird builds such a nest as the Bottle Tit; what a huge affair it is; and the shape of it, how preposterous! It is generally from five to seven inches long, by three or four wide, and looks, hanging beneath the branch of a tree or sticking close to the trunk, like a bundle of green or grey moss that has grown there or accumulated by accident; but peep inside, and see what a soft downy chamber it is—lined with feathers, aye, an inch thick, and quite waterproof: somebody took the pains to count how many feathers there were in one of these nests, and found no less than two thousand three hundred and seventy-nine. Pretty good work that for a pair of little birds to accomplish in a fortnight, when the bleak winds of March were whistling through the nearly naked woods. But it was a labour of love with them; and it is astonishing how much both birds and boys may do when their hearts are in the work.

Some naturalists have said that the nest of this bird has two openings, like a front and back door, but experience goes to prove the contrary; the cases are very rare in which such a construction has been observed. The moss and lichens of which the fabric is composed, are bound together and fixed to the tree by means of spiders' webs and the silk spun by moths and butterflies; frequently small fragments of bark and pieces of wool are woven into it. The eggs are sometimes entirely white, but generally spotted a little with pale red.

They are about the size of a pea, and vary in number from ten to twelve; as many as sixteen have been found in one nest, but this, it is supposed, was the produce of more than one pair of birds; instances having occurred of several pairs going shares in a single habitation.

Besides the three Tits which we have described, there are in this country four other species belonging to the Tit family; these are the Cole Tit (*Parus ater*); the Crested Tit (*Parus cristatus*); the Marsh Tit (*Parus palustris*); and the Bearded Tit (*Parus barbatus*); the last having a long tail like the Muffin, from which, however, it differs widely in the colour of its plumage, and in many other important particulars; it is often called the Least Butcher Bird, being thought by some naturalists to resemble the Shrikes more than the Tits. To each of these beautiful and lively birds we should like to dedicate a song, but our limited space not permitting this, we must be content with one only, which must do for the whole family, to the most common member of which it is addressed:—

The little Tomtit! The little Tomtit!

What a joyous bird is he!

And he loveth about in the sun to flit,

And to perch on the orchard tree:

When the shining buds begin to peep,

With his sharp *tzit, tzit!* and his shrill *cheep, cheep!*

From morn till night 'tis his to keep,

As busy as busy can be.

The little Titmouse! The little Titmouse!

What a comical fellow is he!

With his head awry, and his half-closed eye,

As much as to say—"I see;

I see the maggot within the green bud ;
You cannot, although your sight may be good,
I'm sharper than you, for I'm searching for food.
And I'm hungry—very ! *chee, chee !*"

The little Tomtit has a little black cap,
And oh ! such a twinkling eye !
And his tiny wings they go flip-flap,
As he utters his shrill sharp cry ;
And he looks as proud as an eagle can,
That sits on a rock the sun to scan ;
And he says to the gardener " Come, my man,
We ought to be friends, you and I !"


But the gardener likes not the little Tomtit,
For he sees the ground beneath
With buds bestrewn, and he vows at noon,
Ere night, to be his death.
But surely this is a cruel speech,
For a worm hath eaten the heart of each ;
If a fatal shot should the poor bird reach,
'Tis the innocent suffereth.



PIED WAGTAIL.

WHITE, BLACK AND WHITE, WATER, OR WINTER WAGTAIL. DISH-WASHER. PEGGY WASH-DISH.

FIGURE 33.

 **T**HIS scientific language, this bird has been called *Motacilla Yarrellii*, after an English naturalist Yarrell; it appears to be the same species which Linnæus named *Motacilla alba*, or white; but as there is some doubt about this, we cannot positively assert it. A well-known bird to the country people of Great Britain generally, is the Peggy Wash-dish; so called, we suppose, from its habit of frequenting the banks of running streams and other watery places. It has a slender elegant shape and a long tail, which it frequently flirts up in a very curious manner while hunting for insects in the mud, as if afraid of soiling it.

The Wagtail is a very active bird; it runs with great swiftness, and flies from place to place with short flights, which have a wave-like motion; it frequently turns and returns, as attracted here and there by the tiny winged creatures on which it chiefly feeds. It also hovers over the water, skims along the surface, and catches with great dexterity the minnows and other small inhabitants of the streams and ponds, to which, however, the bird by no means confines itself, being frequently seen in the meadows and in the garden plots; sometimes in the rick-yard or on the house-top hunting for flies. The name

Wagtail is derived from a peculiar fanning motion of the tail which the bird makes as if to steady itself when it alights. Its note is little more than a short sweet twitter, which is uttered very frequently.

The nest is composed of stems of grass, leaves, and small roots, with a lining of wool, hair, thistle-down, or feathers; it is loosely put together, and placed in a great variety of situations; sometimes in a hole in a wall or hollow of a tree; in a bank overhanging a stream or under the parapet of a bridge; in the side of a hay, faggot, peat, or other stack; it has been found both in a grass and turnip field. Mr. Jesse tells of one built in a workshop of a manufactory at Taunton, near the wheel of a lathe, which was frequently in motion; the shop was occupied by braziers, and there in the midst of the din, sat the bird and hatched and reared her young. In a quarry close by where men were working, and under the platform at the top of a coal-pit, with the trampling of feet overhead and the jar of the coals drawn up from below, the parent Wagtails have been known to construct their nest, and lay their five or six light grey or yellowish-white eggs, spotted with darker grey or brown, and measuring nine twelfths of an inch long, and seven twelfths and a quarter broad. They generally build about the middle of April, and sometimes rear two broods.

Peggy, Peggy wash-the-dish !

By the sandy bank she sits,

Or across the stream she flits,

Catching, now and then, a fish ;

Living ever by her wits,

Who a merrier life could wish ?

GREY WAGTAIL.

WINTER, OR YELLOW WAGTAIL.

FIGURE 34.



HIS is not so common a bird as the last, and therefore has not been honoured with such a variety of popular names. It is a very beautiful bird, the plumage of the breast and upper part of the tail being of a bright yellow, hence its scientific name, *Motacilla sulphureus*, that is, sulphur-coloured. The habits of this bird are much like those of the last; it is, however, somewhat more shy, and generally builds its nest on the ground, although, like its pied relative, it sometimes exhibits a curious taste in this matter, choosing at one time the hollow of a spout, at another the shelf of an outhouse, or the window-sill of a dairy, or the switches of a railway, within two or three inches of every passing train. The eggs are from five to eight in number, and usually of about the same size and colour as those of the pied species, like which too, they vary considerably in both these particulars.

The other Wagtails known in this country are the White Wagtail, thought by some to be but a variety of the pied species; the Grey-headed Wagtail, which naturalists call *Motacilla neglecta*, or the neglected;

and the Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*); they are all much alike in their habits, and form a most interesting family group of birds.

“At hand,” says Bishop Mant, “I greet
The nimble Wagtail’s brisk *te-wheet!*”
But whether ’tis the Wagtail Grey,
Or Pied, the Bishop does not say.
Nor matters it, although it be
One other of the family;
For all are brisk, and full of glee,
And whether flitting in the sun,
Or here and there they nimbly run,
They are a pleasant sight to see.



TREE PIPIT.

PIPIT. FIELD, LESSER FIELD, MEADOW, GRASSHOPPER, LESSER-CRESTED, SHORT-HEELED FIELD, OR TREE LARK. FIELD TITLING.

FIGURE 35.



THIS is a migratory bird, arriving in England near the latter end of April, and leaving us again in September. Its food consists of flies, caterpillars, grasshoppers, worms, and small seeds. It has a sweet low warble of its own, with but little variety in it, something like *tzee, tzee, tzee*, often repeated. Some naturalists call the bird *Alauda trivialis*, the first word signifying a Lark, and the last the same as the English word trivial, that is small, insignificant; others term it *Anthus arboreus*, that is, a little bird, or a Pipit, belonging to trees.

The nest of this bird is placed on the ground amid woods and plantations, generally sheltered by a tuft of grass, or the rank herbage of a hedge-row, or a flowery bank. Mr. Neville Wood found one fixed in the lower branches of a small thick bush. The materials used in the construction are mosses, with fibrous roots and dried grass; fine grass and a few leaves form the lining: it measures about three inches across, and the sides are about an inch in thickness. The eggs, four or five in number, are generally of a pale greyish colour, with a

faint tinge of purple, and spots of purplish brown or red; the colour, however, varies greatly, as does also the size, the average of which appears to be seven twelfths of an inch in length, by nine twelfths in breadth.

The Tree Pipit builds in a tuft of grass,
Surrounded by hedge-row flowers,
And his days of sunshine merrily pass,
Or there in woodland bowers;
And he stays not till winter strips the tree;
For the Pipit—a wise little bird is he!



MEADOW PIPIT.

TITLARK. TITLING. MEADOW TITLING. PIPIT, OR
 MEADOW LARK. MOSS CHEEPER. GREY CHEEPER.
 LING BIRD.

FIGURE 36.



THIS is a more common bird than the last, and remaining with us the whole year through, is of course better known; for as adversity tries and shows the character of man, so does the season of cold and scarcity reveal most fully the habits and instincts of the wild creatures. Everywhere throughout Great Britain is to be found the *Anthus* or *Alauda pratensis*, the Meadow Pipit or Lark, and in all kinds of situations: hill or valley; marsh or moorland; shady woods, and meadows open to the sunshine, are alike the home and pleasure grounds of this little olive brown bird, with the whitish speckled breast, and sharp restless eye. On the summits of the highest mountains; in the depths of the deepest valleys; on the sandy sea-shore, and far inland, where the solemn sound of the rolling billows is never heard; in the near neighbourhood of busy towns, and away in the wilderness, where the foot of man seldom intrudes, amid the gorse, and the ling, and the purple heather, and the tall waving grasses, the Titlark sings its cheerful song, soft and musical, though, like its namesake of the tree, but little varied. *Peep-peep!* it goes, while hovering over

its nest on the wing, or alighting with a gentle sweep on a low bush or a rail, where it stands awhile, flirting its tail about like a Wagtail *Peep-peep*, then *Peep-pit*—*Pipit*—as if calling its own name. If alarmed, it utters a sharp *tritz, tritz!* and flies off, sometimes with apparent effort, as if wounded, to entice the intruder from its nest, which is placed on, or close to, the ground, and is composed of dried grass, lined with finer grass and a few hairs; sometimes a little moss is used in the construction. The eggs are from four to six in number, and scarcely any two sets are exactly alike in colour; sometimes the ground tint is reddish brown or reddish white; sometimes a yellowish brown; and sometimes a pale blue or grey; in all cases they are mottled and marked with deeper brown, especially near the larger end: the average length is nine twelfths of an inch, breadth seven twelfths.

This bird shares with the Hedge Sparrow the honour, if such it may be called, of most frequently hatching and rearing the young of the Cuckoo. The Irish naturalist, Thompson, relates a remarkable instance of sagacity with reference to the Titlark, as the bird is perhaps most commonly called, which we ought to quote here. It is to the effect that a nest being found by some truant boys at the side of a drain in a field, was by them deprived of the grassy covering which concealed it. On visiting the spot the day after the occurrence, it was found that a quantity of withered grass had been laid regularly across the nest, so as completely to hide it; this was removed, and out flew the bird. On the next day again the grass was found

similarly placed as before, and beneath it was a small aperture by which the little architect made her entrance and exit; she had clearly done her best to repair the mischief, and screen her nest from observation. Moss Cheeper is the name by which this bird is generally known in Ireland, the term having reference to the moss or peat covering the ground which it mostly inhabits, and also to its call-note *cheep*! This name also applies to it in Scotland, and in some parts of Ireland it is called Wekeen, referring probably to the double ee sound of its note.

Besides the Meadow and Tree Pipits, which are frequently confounded, there are three other species of British birds which are commonly placed in the *Anthus* or Pipit genus: these are Richard's Pipit (*Anthus Ricardi*), a rare and beautiful bird, very like a Lark; the Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus montanus*), pertaining to mountains, also rare; and the Rock Pipit (*Anthus aquaticus*), from *aqua*, water, because it frequents watery places; this is by no means an uncommon bird, and also closely resembles the Larks, to which the Pipits are nearly allied.

The Mead Pipit tarries the whole year through,
Like a firm and steadfast friend;
When the gales are soft, and the skies are blue,
When the gales are keen, and the black clouds bend
Over the earth; the bird is near,
With his cheerful note to gladden the ear.

SKY LARK.

LAVEROCK. FIELD, OR COMMON LARK.

FIGURE 37.

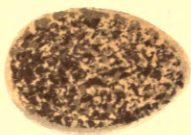


HAT a striking proof is it of the goodness of the Great Creator of the universe, that everything which is most beautiful and loveable, and pleasing to the senses, is also common; the bright warm sunshine, the cool fresh breezes, the lovely shapes, the rich hues, and delicious perfume of flowers, and a hundred other sources of innocent enjoyment, are all common. Every day and every hour we may listen to the melody of birds, and, as the American poet says, may

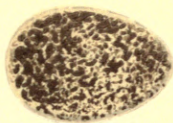
“Go abroad, rejoicing in the joy
Of beautiful and well-created things.”

The woods are full of music, and there is nothing to pay for hearing it, for it is common to all; the streams that glide sparkling in the sunshine, every thirsty lip may drink of them; and the daisies and buttercups—nature’s gold and silver—every child may gather them, and grow rich with the treasures of the earth. And up in the air there sings the Lark—sings all over the land, and all day long, and a great part of the year through, the commonest of feathered songsters, and perhaps the very sweetest; at all events the most cheerful and glad-

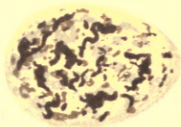
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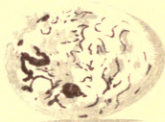
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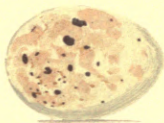
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some of any. Let my young readers, then, never despise common things, for as we said before, they are the most beautiful and loveable.

This Sky Lark, now—this *Alauda arvensis*, or Lark of the Fields, as the naturalists call it—up he springs, while the morning dew lies fresh upon the grass, and he soars and sings “as if he had learned music and motion from an angel,” so says one of our old divines, named Jeremy Taylor, and we only wish we had space to repeat to our readers one tenth or one hundredth part of the beautiful things that have been said and sung about this plain little sober-coloured *common* bird, the Sky Lark, which builds its nest upon the ground in the corn or the hay field, or in the open pasture; just a little withered grass loosely put together, and lined with some finer fibres, placed in a hollow, and but slightly shrouded from observation, containing four or five eggs of a greenish grey colour, freckled over with light brown; some ten and a half twelfths of an inch long, by eight and a half broad; and if these are not crushed by the careless foot, or broken by the mower’s scythe, or taken to be threaded on a string by the truant schoolboy—shame upon him for the deed!—out of them will come in due time, a choir of songsters that will one day sing at Heaven’s gate, as Shakspeare has it, and fill the air with melody.

But let not my readers think that the Lark is sent upon earth only to please the ear: from every object in nature, even the most dull and inanimate, high and holy lessons are to be learned; and this bird has been especially dwelt on by poets and moralists as one that

teaches many such lessons as a pious and humble mind would gladly receive. Thus Young, in his 'Night Thoughts,' tells us that—

“Pride, like the Eagle, builds among the clouds,
While pleasure, Lark-like, nests upon the ground.”

And James Montgomery, classing together the two sweetest feathered songsters, says—

“The bird that soars on highest wing,
Builds on the ground her lowly nest;
And she that doth most sweetly sing,
Sings in the shade when all things rest;
In Lark and Nightingale we see
What honour hath humility.”

The Sky Lark generally rears two broods in the year, the young of the first being fledged by about the end of June, and the second late in August, or early in September. It is related by Mr. Blyth that on one occasion, when some mowers had shaven off the top of the nest of this bird, without injuring the parent, she sat fast while they levelled the grass around her, and in about an hour afterwards it was found that she had constructed a dome of grass over the nest, leaving an aperture on one side for ingress and egress. Several instances are upon record of the Sky Lark's having moved its eggs and young to a safer spot, when danger threatened them, the long claws of the bird enabling it to do this without much apparent difficulty.

Any one who has noticed the upward flight of the Lark has observed that it ascends spirally, that is, as if it were following the windings of an invisible cork-

screw ; up it goes, soaring and singing, until it becomes a mere speck in the air, where the dazzled eye can scarcely follow it, and if we were to search the ground, in a direct line beneath this musical mote in the sun, it is likely that the nest might be found, with the hen bird sitting upon it, listening to the voice of her mate, who will presently come down straight, as if drawn by a string, to that home of love and happiness so well described by the Scottish poet Grahame :—

“ On tree, or bush, no Lark is ever seen :
The daisied lee he loves, where tufts of grass
Luxuriant crown the ridge ; there, with his mate,
He founds their lowly house of withered bents,
And coarsest speargrass ; next, the inner work
With finer, and still finer fibres lays,
Rounding it curious with his speckled breast.
How strange this untaught art ! it is the gift,
The gift innate of Him, without whose will,
Not even a sparrow falleth to the ground.”



WOOD LARK.

FIGURE 38.



HIS is the *Alauda arborea* of most naturalists; the *Alouette lulu* of the French, so called, we are told, from a singularly mournful cry which it utters in winter, resembling the syllables *lu-lu* long drawn out: the meaning of the Latin phrases our readers will understand, having had them before explained. *Alouette* is the French for Lark. This bird is a very sweet songster, but it chiefly sings in retired, woody places, and has a plaintive, rather than a loud song. It is not nearly so plentiful as the Sky Lark, and in some parts of the country is not found at all.

It builds its nest on the ground, beneath a bush, or behind a tuft of grass, of the same materials as its soaring relative, with the addition of a little hair, and lays four or five eggs of a pale greenish-white ground, spotted and speckled with dull reddish brown: they are nine twelfths of an inch long, by seven twelfths broad. April and July appear to be the most usual months when the eggs are laid, there being frequently two broods in the year. Mudie thinks that the reason why Wood Larks are not so numerous, in proportion to the number of eggs laid, as most other species, is that they build in so inclement a season, and on barren exposed places, so that they are frequently destroyed.

BUNTING.

COMMON, OR CORN BUNTING. BUNTING LARK.

FIGURE 39.



HE Buntings form a sort of connecting link between the Larks and Finches; they are strong, hardy birds, with no great powers of song, and feed upon insects, seeds, and grain. Naturalists have placed them in a family group, under the generic term *Emberiza*: the specific name of the Common Bunting is *miliaria*, because it feeds much upon millet. It is found in most parts of this country, and in the Scottish Islands is generally called the Sparrow. Its note is harsh and unmusical, consisting of the syllables *chack*, *chit*, uttered rapidly. Flocks of these birds congregate in the winter about the stack-yards, and help themselves freely from the corn ricks.

They generally build their nest in April, placing it on the ground, or but slightly elevated above it, amid long grass, or in a low bush, or beneath a bank. It is composed of small roots, straws, and grasses, and lined with the finer parts of the same materials, with some moss and hair: it is large, thick, and somewhat shallow, tolerably neat in appearance, although by no means closely woven.

The eggs are generally four in number, rarely five or six; they are of a blunt oval shape; ten and a half twelfths of an inch long, by about eight twelfths broad; the ground colour is usually greyish white, streaked and spotted with purple and brown of various shades.

BLACK-HEADED BUNTING.

RING, REED, OR PASSERINE BUNTING. REED, WATER,
OR MOUNTAIN SPARROW. RING BIRD, OR FOWL.
BLACK BONNET. CHINK.

FIGURE 40.



THE scientific name of this bird is *Emberiza schœniclus*, the latter term meaning a water-bird, probably, says Mr. Morris, from *scoinus*, a rush. This, and several of its popular names, point out the situations in which we are to look for the Black Bonnet, and we find in the latter term a sufficiently evident mark of distinction. Ring Bird refers, we suppose, to the white ring round the neck, which in the cock, for the hen has a brown pate, contrasts beautifully with the glossy black covering the top and sides of the head. This Bunting is by no means an uncommon bird here, and it may sometimes be seen far away from the streams and marshy places, which it commonly frequents, and where its nest is usually placed on the ground, among coarse grass, weeds, sedge, or rushes; sometimes it may be found in a furze or gorse bush, at a considerable distance from the water; and it has been discovered, though not often, supported on a mass of matted reeds, just over the water, at an elevation of, perhaps, two feet or so.

The nest is composed of grass and fragments of rushes, lined with the down of the reed, a little moss, fine grass, or hair. The eggs are four or five in num-

ber, of a pale purplish, greenish, or brownish white, agreeably spotted with a darker shade of the same; they are of a longish oval form, tapering off finely at each end; they are nine and a half twelfths of an inch long, by seven and a half broad, and are generally laid about the first week in May: a second brood is sometimes produced in July.

Mr. Salmon, of Thetford, a contributor to 'The Magazine of Natural History,' relates that, walking in the spring of the year among some rushes, growing by a river, his attention was arrested by observing a Black-headed Bunting shuffling through the rushes, and trailing along the ground, as if one of her legs or wings were broken. He followed her to see the result, and the bird having led him to some considerable distance, took wing; no doubt much rejoiced to find her stratagem had been successful in preserving her brood, consisting of five young ones, which he afterwards found by the side of a clump of grass, which almost screened it from view. This artifice is frequently resorted to by birds to lead intruders from their nests. Several such instances are mentioned in our little work, and many more might be quoted to show the care and solicitude of the feathered creatures for the safety of their young. There is no prettier sight in nature than to watch the Black-headed Buntings flitting about among the slender reeds and velvet-headed rushes, which bend and sway to and fro as the birds cling to them, and open and shut the feathers of their tails quickly, so that the white portions flash upon the view for a moment like a gleam of light, and are gone again.

YELLOW-HAMMER.

YELLOW BUNTING. YELLOW YELDRING, YOLDING, OR
YOWLEY. YELLOW YELDRICK, YOLKRING, YOIT, OR
YITE. SKITE. DEVIL'S BIRD.

FIGURE 41.



WE have already seen that there are some very ugly names applied to very pretty birds, but surely our beautiful and well-known Yellow-hammer has the ugliest of all: what could possess people to load it with such a string of harsh and disagreeable epithets? The scientific name of the bird is soft and pleasing enough—*Emberiza citrinella*; it glides out of the mouth without any effort, and falls upon the ear with a musical cadence; not so, however, does the note of our golden-plumed friend—a harsh *chit, chit, chirr*, gradually ascending, until it becomes quite a shriek. In Scotland it has been translated into *Deil, Deil, Deil take ye!* addressed, it is supposed, to those who plunder the bird of its eggs or young; and hence the most disagreeable of the above names. We are not learned in bird language, but hardly think this can be the right rendering; such language could never surely come out of an innocent bird's beak, however much excited by rage or sorrow.

Yellow-hammers we have all seen, and all admired; there is not a road-side hedge, along which you can

walk, but out of it one or a pair of them will occasionally fly; and the nest, you may be sure, is not far off. It is rather a bulky affair, somewhat loosely built of moss, small twigs, roots, and hair—the finer materials forming the lining; it is placed on a bank, beneath a bush, or in a clump of grass. The eggs are of a pale purplish white colour, streaked and speckled with dark reddish brown; that is, generally, for they vary considerably, having been found of a pale stone colour, and even white, with delicate markings, like fine marble. They are in length about ten twelfths of an inch; in breadth, eight twelfths; in number, four or five, occasionally six. The young are seldom able to fly before the second week in June: two broods are sometimes reared.

Mr. Thompson relates that in the garden of a friend of his near Belfast, a pair of these birds built their nest at the edge of a gravel walk, and hatched four young ones, three of which were destroyed; when the nest being removed to a place of greater safety, the old birds still kept to it, until their last nestling was able to fly. Mr. Salmon found one of these nests at the height of seven feet from the ground, in a broom tree; and Mr. Hewitson another at the height of six feet in a spruce fir. Grain, and the seeds of grasses and other plants form the principal food of this bird, whose specific name *citrinella*, is derived from *citrus*, a citron or lemon tree, probably on account of the colour of its plumage.

The other Buntings known in this country are the Snow Bunting (*Emberiza nivalis*), a very beautiful bird, found chiefly in the north; the Lapland Bunting,

or Finch (*E. lapponica*), an extremely rare species with us ; the Cirl Bunting (*E. cirrus*), distinguished by its black throat, also rare ; and the Ortolan Bunting (*E. hortulana*), from *hortus*, a garden, a bird with orange tawny breast, of which only a few specimens have been taken in Great Britain. It is thus that Clare describes the nest of the Yellow-hammer :—

“ Just by the wooden bridge a bird flew up,
Scared by the cow-boy as he scrambled down
To reach the misty dewberry,—Let us stoop
And seek its nest. The brook we need not dread—
'Tis scarcely deep enough a bee to drown,
As it sings harmless o'er its pebbly bed.
—Aye, here it is ! stuck close beside the bank,
Beneath the bunch of grass, that spindles rank
Its husk-seeds tall and high :—'tis rudely planned
Of bleached stubbles, and the withered fare
That last year's harvest left upon the land,—
Lined thinly with the horse's sable hair.
Five eggs, pen scribbled o'er with ink their shells,
Resembling writing-scrolls, which Fancy reads
As Nature's poesy and Pastoral spells—
They are the Yellow-hammer's, and she dwells,
Most poet-like, 'mid brooks and flowery weeds.”



CHAFFINCH.

SHILFA. SCOBBY. SHELLY. SKELLY. SHELL-APPLE.
 CHAFFY. BOLDIE. TWINK. SPINK. PINK. FINK.
 BEECH, AND HORSE-DUNG FINCH.

FIGURE 42.



HERE again we have a long army of names, some of them sounding very like terms of endearment, for which they were, no doubt, intended ; some of reproach ; several of them have reference to the various call-notes which the bird utters, one of these being a shrill *fink, fink!* another a more low and somewhat lingering *treef. treef.* Shilfa is a term more used in Scotland than elsewhere ; and other of the names are employed only in certain localities. Naturalists call the Chaffinch *Fringilla cælebs*, meaning a Finch that is a bachelor, because they say, that during a part of the year the male birds leave the hens, and live altogether apart from them. This bird is not naturally a brilliant songster, although it is a very sweet one ; yet by a careful system of training it may be made almost to rival the Canary, and others of the best feathered musicians of the cage and aviary. In Germany, whence we get the greater part of our well-trained song birds, there are regular schools where Chaffinches are systematically taught.

The Chaffinch is in every way a neat and handsome bird, well dressed, and well proportioned—a very pink

of a bird ; this, perhaps, is the reason why he is sometimes called a Pink ; and, like most of the Finches, he is, too, a very neat builder. A Chaffinch's nest, built under favorable circumstances, is a perfect model of what a bird's nest should be,—round and compact, and closely woven, without any loose, ragged material sticking about it, to spoil the uniformity of the clear outline. It is generally composed of moss, interspersed with various coloured lichens, so as best to accord in colour with the situation in which it is placed ; sometimes grasses, stalks of plants, and small roots are used ; sometimes the lining is wool ; at others, hair or feathers, thistle-down or spiders' webs, or, in short, any suitable substance which comes readily to hand, or claw and beak, as we should rather say. But whatever the material may be, the little architect is sure to work it in neatly, and make a good job of it. The situations chosen for building are as various as the materials ; sometimes the nest is fixed in a bush or a hedge-row, or between the branches of a fruit-tree, especially one which is trained up a wall, between which and the tree the nest is generally placed.

A correspondent of 'The Field Naturalist's Magazine' relates that a pair of Chaffinches built in a shrub so close to the window of his sitting-room, that he could observe their operations. The foundation of the nest was laid on the 12th of April ; the female only worked at it, and by great diligence the beautiful structure was finished in three weeks. The first egg was deposited on the 2nd of May ; four others were afterwards added, and the whole five were hatched on

the 15th. During the time of sitting the male often visited his partner, but it was not observed that he brought her food; she sat steadily and patiently, quite undisturbed, as it appeared, by the constant observation to which she was subjected from the open window.

A gentleman who writes to the editor of the 'Zoologist,' says, "One of the oldest circumstances that I can recollect about birds is, that a pair of Chaffinches annually built their nest in an old pear tree, and placed it upon a branch, overhanging a walk, so low, that it was often struck by the heads of passengers;" and this reminds us that the Shell-apple, as the bird is called from this circumstance, is very fond of picking to pieces the buds of the pear and apple trees, no doubt like the Tomtit, for the sake of the insects which he finds therein. The Chaffinch's eggs are in shape a well-formed oval, nine twelfths of an inch long, by six broad; the colour is usually a dull bluish green, clouded with dusky red, the two tints sometimes running into each other.

Grahame gives us a pretty picture of this bird in its woodland retreat, which we are tempted to set before our readers.

"At such a still and sultry hour as this,
When not a strain is heard through all the woods,
I've seen the SHILFA light from off his perch,
And hop into a shallow of the stream,
Then, half afraid, flit to the shore, then in
Again alight, and dip his rosy breast
And fluttering wings, while dew-like globules coursed
The plumage of his brown-empurpled back.
The barefoot boy, who, on some slaty stone,
Almost too hot for touch, has watching stood,


Now thinks the well-drenched prize his own,
And rushes forward ;—quick, though wet, the wing
Gains the first branches of some neighbouring tree,
And baulks the upward gazing hopeless eye.
The ruffling plumes are shook, the pens are trimmed,
And full and clear the sprightly ditty rings,
Cheering the brooding dam : she sits concealed
Within the nest deep hollowed, well disguised
With lichens grey, and mosses gradual blent,
As if it were a knurle in the bough."



SPARROW.

COMMON, HOUSE, OR DOMESTIC SPARROW.

FIGURE 43.

 HIS very commonest of common birds must be well known to all our readers. A bold familiar bird, he hops about our path, both in summer and winter, and takes, without waiting for an invitation, a share of whatever he finds eatable. We cannot feed our pigs, or our fowls, or our pigeons, but we feed the Sparrows also, and their chirpings are never out of our ears ; neither should the thought be out of our minds that He who, as the Scripture tells us, feeds the Ravens, and suffers not a Sparrow to fall to the ground unnoticed, is ever near to mark our

doings, and to punish or reward us according to our deserts.

Every idle nest-pilferer knows the colour of the Sparrow's eggs, and where they may be found ; but as we trust that we are not addressing such, we think it well to give some slight description of them. The colour of the eggs generally is a dull light grey, much spotted and streaked all over with ash colour and dusky brown ; these markings vary greatly in different eggs, but a general resemblance may be traced ; ten twelfths of an inch long by seven twelfths broad is the average size. The nest is rather bulky, composed of straw, grass, leaves, twigs, and the like, with a lining of hair, wool, or feathers ; it is not very neatly put together, and is placed in some elevated position, in any convenient cavity, such as a hole or crevice in a wall, an orifice in an old water-pipe, a space beneath the eaves of tiles or thatch. Five or six is the usual number of eggs, and three broods are often reared in one season. Were not the Sparrow so prolific a bird, one would think that it would long since have become extinct, for constant war is waged against it, and truly a price is set upon its head, under the impression, as we think a mistaken one, that it is a most mischievous bird to the husbandman and the gardener. That sparrows consume a considerable quantity of grain and seeds, and do some injury to the fruit, we do not mean to deny ; but there is plenty of evidence to prove that they also destroy an immense number of destructive insects, sufficient, at least, to balance the account which man has against them, if not to make him considerably their debtor.

This question has been repeatedly argued ; and, among others, Mr. Hawley, of Doncaster, has taken up the cudgels in defence of our persecuted chirper of the house-top. In the 'Zoologist' he thus states the case :—" I have watched pairs of Sparrows repeatedly feeding their young, and have found that they bring food to their nest once in ten minutes during at least six hours of the twenty-four, and that each time from two to six caterpillars are brought. Now, suppose that the 'three thousand five hundred Sparrows' destroyed by 'The Association for killing Sparrows' were to have been alive the next spring, each pair to have built a nest, and reared successive broods of young, during three months, we have, at the rate of two hundred and fifty thousand per day, the enormous multitude of twenty-one millions and sixty-eight thousand larvæ prevented from destroying the products of the land, and from increasing their number from fifty to five hundred fold."

It seems, then, after all, that the sadly maligned Sparrow is a bird more sinned against than sinning. Many very curious anecdotes, illustrative of the sagacity and other remarkable qualities of the Sparrow, are related by naturalists, and especially in Mr. Morris's 'History of British Birds' do we find such results of a close observation of the habits and manners of the *Fringilla* or *Passer domestica* given at great length.

"Who killed Cock Robin?
'I,' said the Sparrow,
'With my bow and arrow,
And I killed Cock Robin.'"

This is a stigma upon the character of our feathered

friend which ought to be removed. Putting out of sight the absurdity of supposing him capable of using a bow at all, we may remark that Cock Robin is a much more fierce and quarrelsome bird, and, to say the least, as likely to kill, as be killed by, the Sparrow, which is a spirited bird too, when there is occasion for the display of valour.

Among the curious places chosen by the Sparrow to build, we may mention the lion's mouth over Northumberland House, at Charing Cross, London; but London Sparrows are such desperately impudent birds; they seem to care for nothing. Amid the carved foliage of the stately Corinthian column, or behind the projections of the fretted frieze-work of the royal palace, even, do these dingy denizens of the smoky city make their habitation, and chirp away as noisily as in the straw-built thatch. Beneath the roof that covers "the collective wisdom of the nation," as the English Parliament is called, or above the grand doorway of that noble old Abbey of Westminster, close by, there are the Sparrows chattering and chattering, and quarrelling about the possession of an angel's wing or a grim demoniacal face for a roosting-place.



GREENFINCH.

GREEN LINNET. GREEN GROSBEAK.

FIGURE 44.



F*RINGILLA*, or *Coccothraustes chloris* is the scientific name of this bird; the first term meaning a Finch; the second being derived from *coccus*, a berry, and *thrauö*, to break; and the last signifying light green, properly the colour of young grass—in allusion to the prevailing tint of the plumage of the bird, which, like all the Finches, is handsome and stoutly built. It is by no means uncommon in this country, where it continues all the year round, collecting into flocks in the winter, and resorting to the farm-yards for the sake of the grain stored there.

The Greenfinches generally begin to build in April: a completed nest has been found as early as March 26th. Small roots, twigs, moss, and straws form the outer materials, and the same of finer texture, with thistle-down, feathers, and hair, the inner. The building-sites selected are various—sometimes it is a low bush, or an evergreen; sometimes the ivy against a wall; and not unfrequently the forked branches of a fruit tree, whose buds are sure to undergo a careful examination for spiders lurking within. The eggs, from four to seven in number, are of a bluish or reddish white, spotted with purple, grey, and dark brown; some are much more covered with markings than others; they are

nearly eleven twelfths of an inch long, and about eight broad, and taper considerably at one end. According to Neville Wood, this bird pays remarkable attention to its young, and if they are taken, flutters about the hand of the person who does the mischief, and strives to prevent it. One of its favourite nesting places, if Bishop Mant is correct, is a pine tree: he says,

“A cradle for the Greenbird’s bed,
And bowery covert o’er her head,
A forked pine supplies.”



GOLDFINCH.

THISTLE FINCH. GOLDSPINK. GOLDIE. KING HARRY.
RED-CAP. PROUD-TAIL.

FIGURE 45.



CARDUELIS elegans is the scientific name of this most beautiful and musical of Finches; from *carduus*, a thistle, of the downy seeds of which the bird is very fond; the meaning of the second, or specific name, we need hardly explain, its resemblance to an English word most applicable to the Goldfinch, rendering it sufficiently plain. Master Goldie is, in truth, an elegant fellow, alike in shape and dress; and he seems to know it, too. King Harry himself bore not his honours with a prouder air; his are royal robes, and right royally does he wear them; and yet he is a sprightly bird, and very affable, as greatness should be, and therefore he is a universal favourite; loved and admired by all, whether he be caged or free. Would you see him in his glory, go out on a bright autumnal day, to some waste ground, where thistles are plentiful; there he is, flying from clump to clump, clinging to the prickly stems, picking out the downy seeds, and feasting to his heart's content, and twittering his lively notes to express his satisfaction. How the gold of his throat and wings gleams in the sunshine, finely relieved by the glossly black of the top of the head, and neck, tail, and upper and lower parts

of the wings; the pale brown of the back shines like satin, and the intense crimson above and beneath the eyes glows like a ruby. How sprightly are all the motions of the bird, and how graceful! Who that could see it thus, in the full enjoyment of liberty, would like to have it shut up in a close cage? let the bars be ever so bright with gilding, they are but prison bars to him. He may be very cheerful, and perform a number of amusing tricks, such as drawing up water and seed in his tiny bucket. He may sing till he makes the place of his confinement echo again, for sing he must, whether in freedom or captivity. But only give him a chance of escape, and see how gladly he will fly away to the green woods and the flowery meadows.

Did my readers ever hear what Geoffrey Chaucer, who has been called the father of English poetry, said upon this subject? Hear his lines—

“Take any bird, and put it in a cage,
And do thy best and utmost to engage
The bird to love it; give it meat and drink,
And every dainty housewife can bethink;
And keep the cage as cleanly as you may,
And let it be with gilt never so gay;
Yet had this bird by twenty thousand fold,
Rather be in a forest wild and cold,
And feed on worms and such like wretchedness:
Yea, ever will he tax his whole address,
To get out of the cage when best he may,
His liberty the bird desireth aye.”

Macgillivray calls this bird the Red-fronted Thistlefinch, and in France it is termed *Chardonneret*, from *chardon*, a thistle. It feeds principally upon seeds of what is called the composite order of plants, most of

which have a downy substance attached to them, like those of the plant above named and the groundsel. In spring the Goldie or Goldspink, as the Scotch call him, picks the seeds out of the fir-cones, and feasts upon them. He begins to sing his sweet and varied song about the end of March, and continues it for four months or so. The nest of the bird, which Bolton says is completed in three days, although it is very neatly and carefully finished, is composed externally of grass, small twigs and roots, moss, and lichens; internally of wool and hair, the down of the willow and other plants, and sometimes a few leaves or feathers, all closely interwoven. The eggs, four or five in number, are bluish white or light grey, slightly spotted and occasionally streaked with greyish purple and brown; they are nine twelfths of an inch long, by six and a half broad. Two broods are usually reared in the year. Grahame shall tell us where the nest is usually placed.—

“ With equal art externally disguised,
But of internal structure passing far
The feathered concaves of the other tribes,
The GOLDFINCH weaves, with willow down inlaid,
And cannach tufts, his wonderful abode.
Sometimes, suspended at the limber end
Of plane-tree spray, among the broad-leaved shoots
The tiny hammock swings to every gale;
Sometimes in closest thickets 'tis conceal'd;
Sometimes in hedge luxuriant, where the brier,
The bramble, and the crooked plum-tree branch,
Warp through the thorn, surmounted by the flowers
Of climbing vetch, and honeysuckle wild,
All undefaced by Art's deforming hand.
But mark the pretty bird himself! how light
And quick his every motion, every note!

How beautiful his plumes ! his red-tinged head ;
His breast of brown : and see him stretch his wing ;
A fairy fan of golden spokes it seems.
Oft on the thistle's tuft he, nibbling, sits,
Light as the down ; then, 'mid a flight of downs,
He wings his way, piping his shrillest call."



LINNET.

COMMON, BROWN, GREY, RED-BREASTED, ROSE, OR WHIN
LINNET. GREATER REDPOLE. LINTIE.

FIGURE 46.



VERY different bird in appearance from the last, is the plain little Brown Linnet, a sober-coloured bird generally, although its plumage changes considerably at different periods, and frequently there is a beautiful rose-coloured flush, diffused, as it were, over nearly the whole surface, but especially showing itself on the breast, top of the head, and middle of the back and wings ; it always seems to us as if the gentle bird were blushing at the praises which its fine voice and good qualities call forth. A very sweet songster is the Linnet, and a very pretty interesting bird, although not so showy as most others of the Finch tribe, to which it properly belongs. It possesses great imitative powers, and from its docility may be easily

trained and taught ; it is therefore highly valued as a cage and aviary bird. Its scientific name is *Fringilla*, or *Linaria cannabina*, derived, says Morris, from *linum*, flax ; and *canna*, a cane or reed. The reason of the first term we can well understand, as the bird feeds much on the flax seed ; but we are at a loss to account for the second, as there seems no sort of natural connection between the habits or food of the bird, and the aquatic plants from which the specific name is said to come.

The favourite haunts of the Linnet, which is a permanent resident in this country, are the wild hilly tracts, where the gorse, or whin, the broom and the heather, grow abundantly, as well as the plants upon whose seeds they chiefly feed : there they find both food and shelter, and are seldom disturbed by the presence of man. In the winter, however, they assemble in flocks, and betake them to the cultivated grounds, where they are destroyed in large numbers, being snared or shot, like the Finches and Larks, for the sake of their flesh.

Small twigs and stalks of grass, intermixed with moss and wool, and lined with feathers and hair, compose the nest of the Lintie, or Lintwhite, as this bird is called in Scotland, where it is perhaps more plentiful than in the southern parts of the island. It is a neat structure, and is commonly placed on one of the low shrubs or bushes which grow upon the moor and mountain side ; sometimes it may be found among the tall grass or heather ; and sometimes, though rarely, in a tree, ten or twelve feet from the ground. The eggs

usually number from four to six; they measure about nine twelfths of an inch long, by six and a half broad; the colour is usually a bluish white, spotted most thickly at the larger end with purplish grey and reddish brown. Some have been found of a dull dark red colour, without spots, and some of a pure white.

The poet Darwin will furnish us with a few lines descriptive of the nest of the bird.

“The busy birds with nice selection cull
Soft thistle-down, grey moss, and scatter’d wool;
Far from each prying eye the nest prepare,
Form’d of warm moss, and lined with softest hair.
Week after week, regardless of her food,
The incumbent Linnet warms her future brood;
Each spotted egg with ivory bill she turns,
Day after day with fond impatience burns;
Hears the young prisoner chirping in his cell,
And breaks in hemispheres the fragile shell.”



LESSER REDPOLE.

LITTLE REDPOLE LINNET.

FIGURE 47.

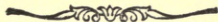


HIS is a much smaller bird than the common Linnet, to which, in many respects, it bears a close resemblance. Naturalists call it *Fringilla linaria*, or *Linaria minor*, that is, the Flax Finch, or the Lesser Flax-bird. In the north of England, Ireland, and Scotland, it resides throughout the year, but only appears in the south during the autumn and winter, except occasionally and rarely. It is a pretty lively bird, very nimble and active, like the Titmouse, assuming a great variety of curious attitudes, when hunting for food, among the birch and alder trees, which it chiefly frequents. The great American naturalist says that few birds display a more affectionate disposition than this, and tells us how pleased he was to see several on a twig, feeding each other by passing a seed from bill to bill. They breed chiefly in the hilly districts, like the Linnet, and build their nests in a low bush or tree, or among the heather on the ground; it is formed of moss, grass, stems, and willow catkins, the last, and also feathers, being used for the lining. The eggs, four or five in number, are of a pale bluish-green colour, spotted with brown. The young are hatched late, and

are seldom ready to fly before the end of June, or beginning of July.

The following lines by Grahame will apply as well to this as to the last species.

“ When whinny braes are garlanded with gold,
And, blythe, the lamb pursues, in merry chase,
His twin around the bush ; the Linnet, then,
With the prickly fortress builds her bower,
And warmly lines it round, with hair and wool
Inwove. Sweet minstrel, may'st thou long delight
The whinny know, and broomy brae, and bank
Of fragrant birch ! May never fowler's snare
Tangle thy struggling foot ! ”



BULLFINCH.

COAL-HOOD. RED-HOOP. TINY-HOOP. ALP. POPE.
NOPE.

FIGURE 48.



THIS is rather a handsome than an elegant bird ; the shape is somewhat clumsy, but the plumage exceedingly rich and striking. We need not describe it, as all our readers must have seen the large-bodied, red-breasted, and black-hooded Finch, called by naturalists *Loxia pyrrhula* or *Pyrrhula vulgaris*, the first term signifying oblique or transverse, from the shape of the bill ; the second, a bird with red plumage, from *pyrros*, red ; and the third, *vulgaris*, common.

The Bullfinch is more especially a bird of the green-wood ; it is not much found in either very barren or very highly-cultivated districts, although its retreats are not generally far from the latter. It delights to dwell amid the chequered shade of interlacing boughs, whence it can sally out to some near-at-hand orchard or garden, to feast upon the ripe fruit, or the blossom-buds of various trees, such as the apple, pear, cherry, medlar, gooseberry, or the plum. Mr. Morris conjectures that the common name of this bird is a corruption of Budfinch, or Boodfinch, as it is pronounced in the north. Besides fruit, this Finch feeds on the

seeds and leaves of groundsel and other weeds, hips and haws, and various kinds of berries.

The natural song of the Bullfinch is a short, sweet, plaintive, piping, while giving utterance to which it generally flirts up the tail in a very curious manner. Probably, says Morris, its vernacular, that is, common, names Nope, Hoop, Pope, are derived from its resemblance to these sounds. In spring, while the hen is sitting on her nest, the male bird will pour out for hours together, a low and broken warble, as it would seem, to cheer and enliven her labours, and, while doing so, he keeps puffing out his feathers, and wriggling his head about in a most extraordinary manner, no doubt to show his affection. The Bullfinch is a very teachable bird; he learns to pipe and whistle tunes, and even to articulate words. Some of the birds so taught fetch high prices; they are chiefly brought from Germany.

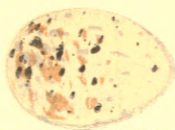
Our Bully generally commences housekeeping at the beginning of May; he chooses, perhaps, a fir-tree, perhaps a hawthorn, or some other thick bush, "and there he makes his home," at a height, generally, of not less than four or five feet from the ground. He is not so neat a builder as are nearly all the other members of his family; the materials he uses are twigs, fine roots, and moss. The eggs, four or five in number, are of a pale blue, speckled and streaked with purplish-grey and reddish-brown; they are nine and a half twelfths of an inch long by seven and a half broad. Bullfinches frequently build in shrubberies and gardens. A gentleman residing at Frickley Hall, near Doncaster, relates that

a hen bird of this species, which was sitting in a laurel near the house, suffered herself to be touched, and would feed from the hand without any manifestation of fear.

Numerous other anecdotes might be related to show how gentle and docile a bird this is, but we must now bring our agreeable task to a conclusion.



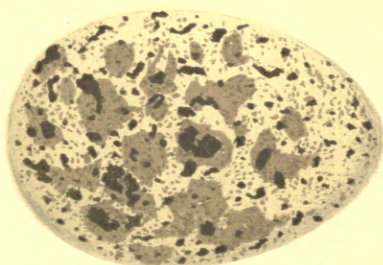
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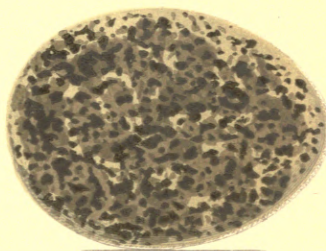
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CROSSBILL.

EUROPEAN OR COMMON CROSSBILL. SHELL OR SHIELD-APPLE.

FIGURE 49.



F those curious birds called Crossbills, from the peculiar construction of the bills, the points of which cross each other, there are three species known in this country, but two of them, namely, the Parrot and White-winged Crossbills, are very rare, only a few specimens having been taken here. The more common kind is a migratory bird, coming in large flocks at very irregular intervals, and visiting more especially those parts of the country where there are woods and plantations of fir and pine, of the seeds of which they are very fond, extracting them with great dexterity from between the scales of the cones; for this operation, the projecting points of the bill appear to be well adapted, as well as for picking out the apple-pips, as they are called, and kernels of other fruits; hence the name shell-apple given to the bird, which was a not uncommon visitor to the English orchards in former times; thus in a curious old record we are told that "In the yeere 1593, was a greate and exceeding yeere of apples; and there were greate plenty of strang birds, that shewed themselves at the tyme the apples were full rype, who fedd uppon the kernells onely of

those apples, and haveing a bill with one beake wrythinge over the other, which would presently bore a greate hole in the apple, and make way to the kernells; they were of the bignesse of a bullfinch, the henne right like the henne of the bullfinch in coulour; the cocke a very glorious bird, in a manner al redde or yellowe on the brest, backe, and head."

We would not advise our young readers to take the above as a lesson in spelling, although it is a very lively and faithful picture of the Crossbill, great flocks of which were English visitants in 1254, 1593, and 1791, when a bird-catcher in Bath caught one hundred pairs, which he sold for five shillings each; again, in 1806, 1828 and 9, and 1835; ever since which time they have generally remained with us in greater or lesser numbers. having been probably induced to do so by the greater abundance of fir plantations. They are very lively birds, chattering and making a shrill noise while engaged in their favourite occupation of picking out seeds; they swing about on the branches of the trees often head downwards, and are very nimble and graceful in their movements, and so fearless of the approach of man, that they can frequently be taken with a hand-net, or knocked down with a stick.

That the Crossbill sometimes breeds in this country there cannot be a doubt, but it does this only as an exception to the general rule; the nest, which has been found at various seasons, has been described as of a loose texture, not unlike that of the Common Greenfinch, though not nearly so well nor so carefully built; the eggs also are not unlike those of that bird but

larger. In Norway and Sweden, where the bird habitually breeds, the nest is built in the uppermost branches of the pines and firs; it is composed of grass, moss, and the finer portion of these trees; one has been found here on an apple tree, and another on a fir, and another, near Dartford, in Kent, on the lowest fork of a pine; this was composed of dry twigs, but no eggs were laid in it, the curiosity of frequent observers having driven the bird away.


Although we have placed this among our *familiar* Birds, the eggs to English collectors are rare and difficult of attainment, and should be prized accordingly. The scientific name given to the species is *Loxia curvirostra*, both the terms having reference to the shape of the beak, the first coming from the Greek *loxos*, curved, and the latter from the Latin *curvus*, curved or bent, and *rostra*, the beak. By some naturalists *Europæa* is the generic term, and this so closely resembles the English name as to require no explanation.



STARLING.

COMMON STARLING, OR STARE.

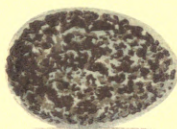
FIGURE 50.

 HIS handsome and well-known bird is sometimes called, when young, the Solitary Thrush. Its scientific name is *Sturnus vulgaris*, which is simply the Latin for the Common Starling. It may be met with in all parts of Britain, even in the Orkney and Shetland Isles, where it sometimes breeds in rocky caves, and fissures, and holes in the turf. More towards the south its nest is found in hollow trees, cavities in chalk-pits, sandy banks and old buildings; it is large and rudely fashioned of straw, roots, dry grass, and other vegetable fibres, with frequently a lining of hair and feathers; the eggs, from four to six in number, are of a delicate greenish blue colour, sometimes altogether plain, but frequently spotted with black; they are of a longish oval shape.

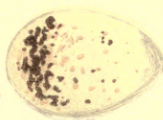
“Nidification,” as Mr. Morris tells us, in his beautiful work on British Birds, “commences about the beginning or middle of April.” This word, my readers should remember, comes from the Latin *nidus*, a nest.

Incubation lasts about sixteen days; *incubatio*, as we have already explained, is the Latin for *to lie* or *sit upon*. These are words we shall often have to use,

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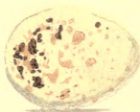
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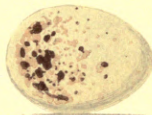
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and therefore we think it well to explain their meaning here, lest they should have escaped the memory of some who take this volume in hand.

The Starling is gregarious and insectivorous, that is, it goes in flocks and feeds on insects ; chiefly on insects, we should say, but not altogether, for it likes also worms, snails, grain, fruit, and seeds of various kinds, so that it may be almost called omnivorous, eating all things. A bold lively bird, something like the Magpie in its habits, given to picking and stealing when it can get a chance ; it is, nevertheless, a general favourite, on account of its beauty and teachability, if we may use such a word. It has naturally a low musical note, which is uttered by both male and female, although least by the latter, and may be taught to articulate many words, so that it is often kept in confinement, where, like the poor bird in Sterne's '*Sentimental Journey*,' we may fancy we hear it exclaiming in piteous tones, "I can't get out!"



CHOUGH.

CORNISH CHOUGH. RED-LEGGED, MARKET-JEW, OR
HERMIT-CROW. RED-LEGGED JACKDAW. GESNER'S
WOOD-CROW. CORNISH, CHAUK, OR CLIFF-DAW.
CORNWALL KAE, OR KILLEGREW.

FIGURE 51.



PLENTY of names here for one bird. Oh, stay, here's another—Long-billed Chough; not to count the scientific names, the most common of which is *Corvus graculus*, that is, a Chough Crow, whichever may be preferred. Some naturalists use a longer specific name, and say *Pyrrhocorax*, which comes from the Greek *pyrrhos*, red, and *Corax*, a Crow. A fine handsome fellow is this, with his sable plumes, over which shimmers a steely blue reflection; his bright eye, and long red bill, and legs of the same colour; the very handsomest of the Crow family, and with us the rarest, although, from all that we can read and learn, it was formerly by no means uncommon, especially in Cornwall, as its name imports. It now occasionally occurs in small flocks in various parts of Great Britain, generally near the coast, where it builds amid the cliffs a rude nest of sticks lined with wool and hair; the eggs are generally five in number, of a dull white colour, spotted with grey and light brown, mostly thick at the larger end. Sometimes the nest is found in old church

or other towers, especially such as are in a ruinous condition.

The Chough feeds chiefly on grasshoppers, beetles, and other insects, in search of which, says Mr. Morris, it will follow the plough like the Rooks ; it will also eat the smaller kinds of crustacea, or shell-fish, and grain and berries. Now and then it indulges, like the Common Crow, in a feast of carrion. It has a shrill note, something like that of the Jackdaw ; it also chatters, and steals, and talks, as well as a Starling, in short is a most accomplished feathered performer. One of its favourite haunts is, or used to be, Shakspeare's cliff at Dover, and our great poet, describing that grand and sublime scene, alludes to the bird.

“ Here's the place :—stand still. How fearful
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low !
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air,
Show scarce so large as beetles.”



RAVEN.

CORBIE. CORBIE CROW. GREAT CORBIE CROW.

FIGURE 52.



SCIENTIFIC name, *Corvus corax*, the first being the Latin, and the second Greek, for a Crow. This is the largest, as it is also one of the best known of the Crow tribe or family. It is found in nearly all parts of the world—in the coldest as well as the hottest climates—amid the wild mountainous regions of everlasting snow, in the depths of the gloomiest forests, and on the wide prairies and sandy plains, its hoarse cry may be heard; as well as on the lonely island, whose shores are lashed by the foaming waves of the mighty ocean, and seldom or ever visited by the prow of the merchant or other vessel.

A bold familiar bird is the Raven, with jet black plumes, and a large powerful bill, fitted for tearing to pieces the flesh of animals on which it often feeds; and a deep hollow voice, that grates harshly upon the ear; and strong feet armed with sharp talons; and wings that spread out to a great extent, and with regular and well-timed beats, *flap, flap, flap*, winnow the air, and support the bird in its long flight over land and sea; while the broad tail, now elevated and now depressed, now turned this way and now that, gives to the heavy body the desired direction. “*Croak!*” one

hears the sound, and scarcely knows whether it comes from the air above or the earth beneath ; but presently the sunshine is obscured by a black shadow, and swoop! down comes the bird of ill omen, as people have generally agreed to consider it, down upon the sick sheep, or any other weak and defenceless creature, that may be within the compass of its keen sight, and commences picking out the eyes of the animal, reminding us of the punishment threatened by the Lord against disobedient children, as mentioned in Proverbs, and paraphrased in Dr. Watts' familiar lines :—

“ Have you not heard what dreadful plagues
Are threatened by the Lord,
To him that breaks his father's law,
Or mocks his mother's word,
What heavy guilt upon him lies,
How cursed is his name,
The Ravens shall pick out his eyes,
And Eagles eat the same.”

Then again, as we see the strong-winged bird sweep far away over the wide sea, we think of the time when the waters covered the face of the whole earth, and “Noah sent forth a Raven, which went to and fro until the waters were dried up.” Or, if in some scene of wild sublimity, some valley hemmed in by lofty mountains, through which a stream goes winding silently, we are startled by that black shadow and harsh grating note, we fancy ourselves by the brook Cherith, where the Ravens brought bread and flesh, morning and evening, to the prophet Elijah, being commanded to do so by God, who, as we are told in

Job, "provideth for the Raven his food;" and in Psalms, "heareth the young Ravens which cry."

In nearly all parts of Great Britain these birds are found; they were formerly more abundant than they are at present, gamekeepers and others having long waged war against them, on account of their real or supposed propensity to destroy the young hares, partridges, pheasants, etc.

In the northern and western parts of Scotland, and in some of the Scottish Isles they are numerous. They make large nests composed of sticks, cemented together with mud, and lined with roots, wool, fur, and such other soft materials as come most readily to hand, or we should rather say, to beak and claw; they are said sometimes to rob the sheep's backs. Their building-places are cliffs and precipices, church towers, caves and rocky fissures, and the clefts between the forked branches of tall trees. The eggs are from four to six in number, of a pale olive green, more or less blotched and spotted with greenish brown and grey. They are early builders, sometimes commencing in January; the eggs, says Mr. Morris, have been taken in the middle of February. Incubation lasts twenty days; both male and female sit on the eggs, in defence of which and their young, they will fight desperately, driving off the hawks, and even eagles and vultures.

The Raven is known to live to a great age, often, when in a domesticated state, seeing out two or three generations of a family. It is one of those birds which possess the power of imitating the human voice, and many anecdotes are told of its proficiency in this

respect. It is a very sagacious bird, indeed so cunning that it has been thought by ignorant persons to know more than it ought, and to be in league with witches and other “uncanny” people. Constantly do we find its cry alluded to, by both ancient and modern poets, as ominous of death.

“The Raven is a dreaded bird,
The stoutest quail when his voice is heard,
For when, ’tis said, his dismal cry
Rends thrice the tranquil azure sky,
’Tis the token,
Surely spoken,
That ravenous death is hovering nigh.”



CARRION CROW.

GOR, GORE, OR FLESH CROW. BLACK NEB. HOODY BRAN.

FIGURE 53.



EVERYBODY knows the common Crow that goes *caw-cawing* over the fields through the long summer day, and hunts in the freshly-turned furrows for grubs and wire-worms, and settles down upon the marshes where the white flocks are feeding, dotting them here and there with great black spots, as though some literary giant had taken too much ink in his pen, and scattered it out over the landscape before he began to write. Oh yes, everybody knows the familiar Crow, called by scientific people *Corvus corone*, Latin and Greek again for the same thing—a Crow! Black and all black is he, a kind of Raven in miniature, closely resembling that bird in his habits as well as appearance. A foul feeder, delighting in putrid carcasses, and all kinds of meat that is not merely a “*little touched*,” but “*very far gone*” indeed. The shepherd does not like him, neither does the gamekeeper, neither does the farmer, although we are inclined to think that the dislike of the latter is owing to an unfounded prejudice; true it is that our friend *Corvus* does sometimes eat grain, but he prefers animal food, and oftener feeds on worms and other grain-destroyers. If you wish to find his nest, you must climb into the tall elm tree, or far up the face of the chalky cliff; it is made of sticks, cemented together

with clay, and lined with roots, straw, wool, moss, or any soft substance which can be had. If in a tree, it is usually placed among the topmost branches, or else on a bough near to the trunk, so as to be well sheltered and hidden from view. The eggs, from four to six in number, are of a pale bluish green or grey, speckled, some very thickly, with light brown and deep grey.

The Crows, like the Ravens, pair for life; the work of building is shared by both birds, and generally commences about the end of February or beginning of March. There is a variety of this species which is almost wholly white, and this is the case also with the Raven. Harrison Ainsworth has written a spirited song on the Carrion Crow, of which this is the first verse:—

“The Carrion Crow is a sexton bold,
He raketh the dead from out the mould;
He delveth the ground like a miser old
Stealthily hiding his store of gold.

Caw! Caw!

The Carrion Crow hath a coat of black,
Silky and sleek, like a priest's, on his back;
Like a lawyer he grubbeth, no matter what way,
The fouler the offal, the richer the prey.

Caw! Caw! the Carrion Crow!

Dig! Dig! in the ground below!



HOODED CROW.

ROYSTON. GREY. GREY-BACKED, DUN, BUNTING,
HEEDY, OR SCARE-CROW. HOODY.

FIGURE 54.

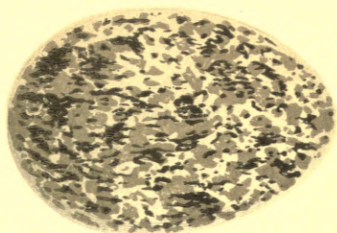


THE Hooded Crow, so called, most probably, on account of the distinct black covering of the head and neck, is not a very common bird in England generally, although it may often be found in certain localities, and at certain seasons, for it is partly migratory, frequenting the southern parts of the island only in winter, usually from October to April. In the north of Scotland, and the Hebrides and other islands, they are always to be found, and in great numbers. In its habits the Hooded Crow resembles the common kind, except that it is more of a coast bird, seldom being found far from the sea-shore, or the banks of estuaries, or tidal rivers.

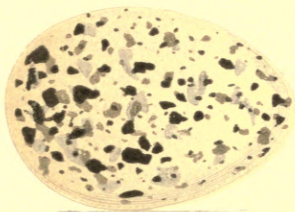
Its nest is generally placed on tall trees, or the clefts and chasms of rocks and hill sides. Mr. Morris describes it as composed of sticks, roots, stalks, or heather, lined with wool and hair. The eggs are from four to six in number, of a green tint, mottled over with greenish brown; some have been found of a yellowish tinge, or with dashes and streaks of yellow, others of a uniform dull dark green, with but few spots or variations of any kind.

It is the opinion of some naturalists that the Hooded

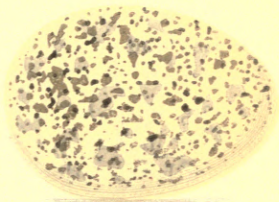
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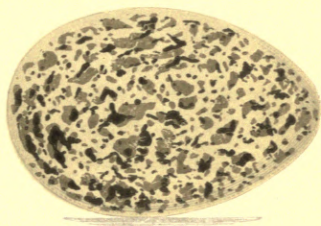
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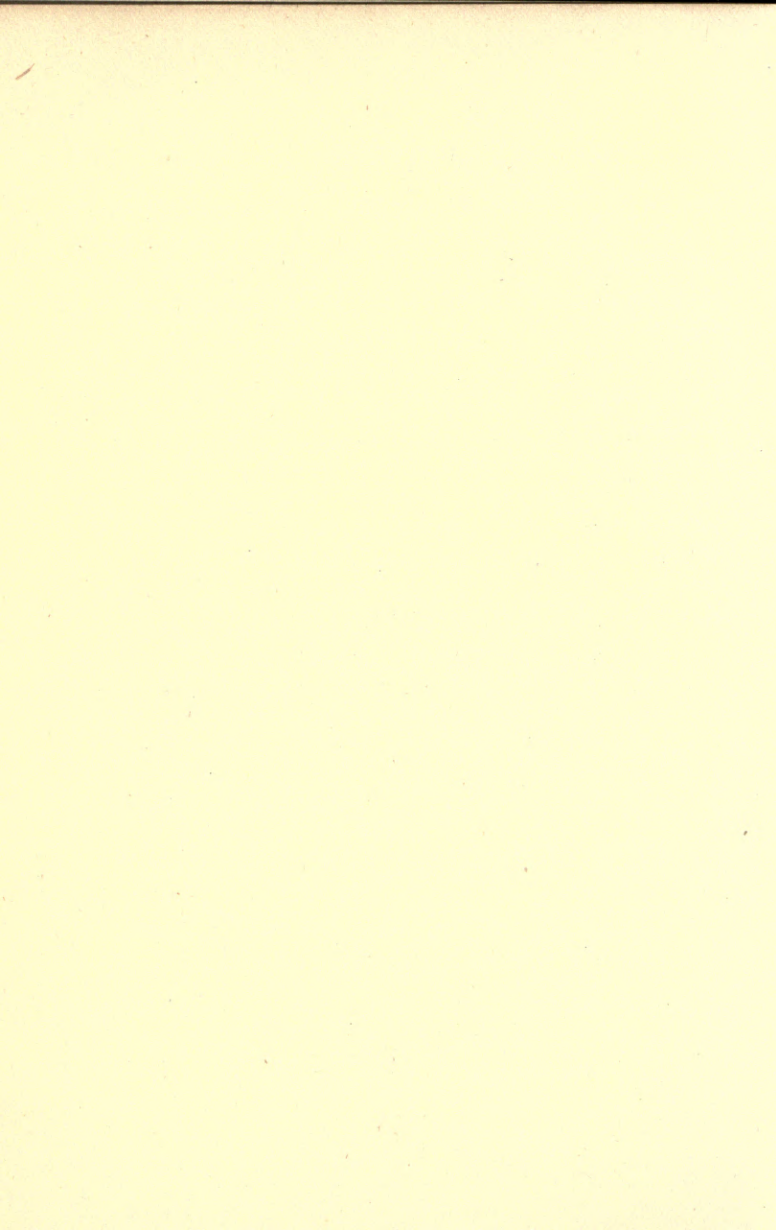


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and Carrion Crows are but varieties of one species, and certain it is that they do sometimes breed together, but there appears to be sufficient distinctive marks and characteristics to warrant the specific difference assumed for them by most of the leading ornithologists.

Frequenting as it does the sea-shore, the Hooded Crow, which may be known by its distinctly marked plumage of dull grey, extending all over the back, breast, and belly, feeds on shell-fish, which it bears up to a great height, and then lets fall on a large stone or piece of rock, so as to break the shell. We have here an instance of something very like reasoning power, in what we must call an unreasoning creature, nor are such instances at all unfrequent in natural history.



ROOK.

BARE-FACED CROW. YDFRUN, OF THE ANCIENT BRITISH.

FIGURE 55.



NATURALISTS term this bird *Corvus frugilegus*. With the meaning of the first, or generic name, our readers are already well acquainted; the specific name comes from the Latin *fruges*—fruits, and *lego*, to collect or gather, and from this we learn that it is a *frugiverous* or fruit-eating bird; it is not, however, altogether so, for it feeds much on insects, worms, slugs, and such small animals, in search of which it digs or delves with its large and strong beak, all around the base of which is bare of feathers, hence the name Bare-faced Crow, by which the bird is known in some localities. It is a matter of dispute whether or not this bareness is caused by the constant use of the bill as a digging instrument; we are inclined to think not, for several reasons, which need not here be stated; but, that the bare whitish skin which surrounds the beak, and which offers such a strong contrast to the rest of the purplish black plumage, is a natural distinction.

Rooks are said to be more abundant in England than in any other part of the world, although they are found in most temperate regions of Europe and Asia; they do

not, like many of the Corvine, or Crow family, increase towards the north, but, on the contrary, decrease in that direction: in the Scottish islands they are not to be met with. They are strictly gregarious birds, immense numbers of them building and rearing their young together. Almost every English Village, or Hall, or old Manor House, has, or at one time had, its "Rookery," where, on the tops of the tall elms or other lofty trees, the sable birds delight to build their large loose nests of sticks, cemented together with clay, and lined with grass and root fibres. There do they hold their noisy councils, morning and evening, but especially at the latter time, before retiring to rest. One would think they had all the affairs of the nation to settle, so long and loud is the debate, or at least that there must be an immense deal of quarrelling about the right to this or that resting-place; and more fighting, too, than there ought to be, among a decent feathered community.

There is something pleasing about the *caw* of the Rook, whether heard in the dreamy quietude of nature, or, as it often is, amid the bustle of the busy town; it is a sociable bird, friendly to man and his belongings. It is an English bird—a *home* bird, and reminds us of domestic scenes and pleasures. We have had rookeries in the very hearts of cities; there was one in the Temple Gardens, in London, close by the stream of life which ever flows and reflows up and down the Strand and Fleet Street. Not many years since it was stated in the papers that, "in the small churchyard of St. Peter's, Westcheap, situated in Wood Street, Cheap-

side, stands a solitary tree, in the lofty branches of which two pairs of Rooks have built themselves nests, and are now busily engaged in rearing two broods, which have been recently hatched." But volumes might be written, as they have been, about Rooks and rookeries; Leigh Hunt, and Charles Lamb, and Washington Irvington, and nearly all the English poets might be called in to give their tribute of praise to this old familiar friend and companion of our life-journey.

The Rooks are frugal nest-builders; they make the same structure do year after year. Early in March they begin to repair their old habitations, which, during the winter, we may see far up amid the naked branches, like so many bundles of dry sticks; the young pairs, we suppose, build new ones, unless they should find a nest left vacant by the removal, by death or otherwise, of parents or other relatives, for all the community must be closely allied.

"Where, in venerable rows,
Widely waving oaks enclose
The moat of yonder antique hall,
Swarms the Rooks with clamorous call;
And, to the toils of nature true,
Wreathe their capacious nests anew,"

says the poet Warton, describing the 1st of April; and generally by the end of May or beginning of June, the young Rooks are fledged. The eggs from which they have emerged do not differ greatly from those of the other members of the *Corvus* family just described. They are usually four or five in number, of a pale

greenish ground colour, blotched and spotted with light brown and yellowish green ; they, however, vary greatly, some being nearly white, others grey, and others olive brown, with markings more or less deep and distinct.



JACKDAW.

DAW. KÆ.

FIGURE 56.



ORVUS monedula is the scientific name of this species, the latter, or specific title, being derived, as Mr. Morris supposes, from *moneo*, to warn; the Daw, like most of the Crow tribe, having been formerly considered a creature of evil augury.

A pert bold fellow is the Jackdaw, restless, inquisitive, and loquacious; ever poking and prying into every hole and corner, and purloining whatever he can lay his claw or his bill on. He seems to delight in mischief, and to consider that to pick and steal is the great end and object of his existence. This is a sad character to give a bird, but we must tell the truth at all hazards, and confess that, notwithstanding the respectability of his appearance, with his suit of silky black, and grey poll, like the wig of a counsellor, he is a sad scamp.

Oh, what a long catalogue of crimes and offences connected with this black-coated offender might we present had we space and inclination to do so; but we have not, and indeed it is not necessary, for all the world knows the character of the subject of these remarks, as well as Thomas Hood, who says—

“The Daw’s not reckoned a religious bird
Because it keeps a cawing from a steeple.”

And this brings us to one of the favorite building places of Kae, as the Scotch people call it; ruined towers and ivy-grown steeples, holes in cliffs and hollow trees, are generally chosen for the heap of sticks loosely piled together, and having a depression in the centre, where, on a layer of wool, hair, grass, or other soft substance, the eggs are deposited; in number from four to six, of a pale bluish white, spotted with greyish brown; some of the spots being large and distinct, and much deeper than the others. The young birds are generally hatched by the end of May, or early in June, by the end of the second week in which month they are usually fit to be taken from the nest; they are easily reared by hand, and become very tame, learning to talk, and play all sorts of curious tricks.

The caw of the Daw is more high and shrill than that of most Crows; it is found in nearly all parts of Great Britain, and is common in Holland, Germany, France, Italy, and most countries of Europe. One remarkable circumstance connected with its nidification is the immense quantity of material which it collects; sometimes it builds in chimneys, and completely stops them up with the huge pile of sticks which it there deposits. It is said that the fire which some years since partly consumed the cathedral of York was much fed and assisted by Jackdaws’ nests on the turrets. In Cambridge, where the Daws are numerous, building in the colleges and church towers, no less than eighteen dozen of deal laths, about nine inches long and one broad,

which had been purloined from the botanic gardens, where they were put into the ground as labels for the plants, were found in the shaft of one chimney in which the birds had built. Many anecdotes are related of the ingenuity they manifest on getting their building materials into the desired position, often through narrow loopholes and up winding staircases they manage to convey long sticks and pieces of wood in a manner truly surprising ; and the way in which they pile up the light fabric upon joists and cross-beams and window-sills, and make it all firm and stable, is no less so, Sometimes the Daws choose less lofty situations for their nests ; generally, as Bishop Mant tells us, they make

“ In spire or looped and windowed tower
Of hallowed fane their nestling bower.
In caverned cliff beside the sea,
Or hollow of the woodland tree ;”

but occasionally they descend, when nature

“ Prompts them in the waste to roam
And seek a subterranean home,
The burrowing rabbit’s haunt, and there
Of sticks and matted wool prepare
Their dwelling, and produce their race,
In that unlikely dwelling-place.”



MAGPIE.

PIET. PIANET. MAG. MADGE.

FIGURE 57.



PICA CAUDATA, *Pica melanoleuca*, and *Corvus pica* are the several names given by naturalists to this bird; the first word is Latin, and means simply a pie; in the same language *caudus* signifies a tail, and a splendid tail our handsome Magpie possesses, long and broad, and, like the beautiful pinions, all shot with green and purple reflections. *Melanoleuca* is compounded of two Greek words, meaning black and white, and no one can deny that this is very appropriate, although it is not so commonly used as the former name. The third title may be translated the Crow-Pie, indicating the particular genus and species of Mag the merry. No member of the Crow family puts on so resplendent a dress as this; beautifully do the snowy shoulders (scapulars, naturalists would say) and belly contrast with the rich velvety black of the back, breast, head, and neck. Rich is the sheen of emerald and amethyst which plays about the tail and wings, as the latter are spread out in the sunshine, and the former flirts up and down with a quick vibrating motion. And such a droll fellow, too, is Mag; every now and then you would think he were dancing, or imitating some fine lady or courtly beau; he steps or hops along in such an odd, fantastic manner. Yes,

a droll fellow, but a sad thief; it is not safe to leave a gold chain, or a ring, or a silver spoon, in his way; up into the old church steeple it is sure to go, if it is not buried in some out of the way corner, all among the moss, and dead leaves, and decayed wood, which have accumulated there for centuries. We all remember the old story of the Maid and the Magpie, and how nearly the poor girl suffered death for the loss of the silver spoons stolen by the bird, who, however, was not so guilty after all, for he did not know that the loss of the glittering objects which attracted his attention would be attended with such serious consequences. He had no sense of right and wrong to guide him as my readers have, and had never been taught the great commandments—"Thou shalt not covet!" and "Thou shalt not steal!"

The chattering Magpie is found chiefly in the cultivated and wooded parts of Britain and Ireland; it is an *omnivorous* feeder, that is, it eats almost anything—*omnes* in Latin, you know, means all. It is a shy, watchful bird, and very difficult to catch; it has a fine broad tail, but we never heard that any one was able to put salt upon it. Such a quick eye the fellow has, and a way of twisting himself about, so as to be looking every way at once; you would catch a weasel asleep sooner than you would Maggie. The nest is made with a hole in the side, whence a sharp look-out can be kept. It is placed in some thick bush or tall prickly hedge, generally at a considerable distance from the ground; it is of a longish oval shape, and made of sticks and thorns, cemented together with mud; on the

lining of roots and grass lie the bluish-white eggs, spotted over with grey and greenish-brown ; there may be six, seven, or even eight of them, although very rarely so many as the latter number. The breeding-time is quite early in the spring, and the same nest is resorted to by one pair of birds year after year.

It is thus that Bishop Mant describes the mode and place of building of what he calls the "Artful Pie."


" On turf-reared platform intermixt,
With clay and cross-laid sticks betwixt,
'Mid hawthorn, fir, or elm tree slung,
Is piled for the expected young,
A soft and neatly-woven home,
Above of tangled thorns a dome,
Forms a sharp fence the nest about,
To keep all rash intruders out.
So like a robber in his hold,
Or some marauding baron bold,
On coasted cliff in olden time,
They sit unblenched in state sublime,
And fortress intricately planned ;
As if they felt that they whose hand
Is aimed at others, rightly deem
The hand of others aimed at them.
So there they dwell, man's dwellings nigh,
But not in man's society ;—
Arabian-like : and little share
His love, nor for his hatred care ;
Prompt of his rural stores a part
To seize, and joyful of their art
His efforts at revenge elude."



JAY.

GAY PIE. JAY PIET.

FIGURE 58.

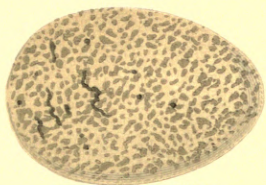
N scientific language *Curvus glandarius*, or *Garrulus glandarius*. The specific name is from the Latin, and signifies of or belonging to acorns; the second generic name is also Latin, and means chattering or talkative, a leading characteristic of this bird, whose harsh cry is frequently heard amid the stillness of the solitary woods.

“Proud of cerulean stains
From heaven’s unsullied arch purloined,
The Jay screams hoarse,”

says Gisborne, in his ‘Walks in a Forest,’ and all persons who are accustomed to woodland scenery must have been startled, ever and anon, by the grating syllables *wrak, wrak*, shortly and sharply repeated by this bird, and have noticed the dull gleam of its blue wings, as it passed in a heavy scurrying manner from tree to tree, or shuffled away down the glade, as though it had committed some crime, and was fearful of being taken.

The Blue-winged Jay is a name commonly given to this certainly handsome bird, whose plumage of delicate brown, variegated with white and black, and set off

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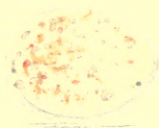
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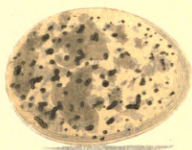
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66



with "cerulean stains," as Gisborne says, give it a striking and pleasing appearance, notwithstanding its general air of dulness and apprehension. It is true, we seldom have an opportunity of observing it closely, except in a state of confinement, where it is not likely to be very lively, for it is a bird of the wild woods, and likes not to be deprived of its free range, and brought into close companionship with man. Sometimes, however, if taken young and properly trained, it becomes a very amusing domestic pet, having a decided talent for mimicry, and being gentle and teachable.

The nest of the Jay is commonly built in a high coppice wood or hedge, generally many feet from the ground, although it is seldom seen near the tops of tall trees, like those of the Magpie and Crow. Montagu says, "He who feels inclined to study the nidification of this bird must search the lower branches of the oak or inspect the woodbine mantling round the hazel."

Morris describes the nest as "of an open shape, formed of twigs and sticks, and well lined with small roots, grasses, and horsehair. Some are much more cleverly constructed than others." And certainly from the representation which he gives of one, we should take the Jay to be a much neater builder than any of its *congeners*, as birds of the same family or genus would be called.

The eggs are five or six in number, of a greenish or yellowish white, freckled all over with two shades of light brown.

Several variations from this common pattern have

been found and described, some being lighter and some darker, and some having a greater degree of polish on them than others.

The Jay is an omnivorous feeder ; but is said to have a great partiality for acorns ; and also for the eggs and young of game-birds, hence he is shot without mercy by those interested in their preservation.

Let us see what Bishop Mant says of him.

“ He who makes his native wood
Resound his screaming, harsh and rude,
Continuously the season through ;
Though scarce his painted wing you'll view
With sable barred, and white and grey,
And varied crest, the lonely Jay !”



GREEN WOODPECKER.

LARGE GREEN WOODPECKER. NICK-A-PECKER. ECLE.
HIGH-HOE. HEW-HOLE. AWL, OR RAIN-BIRD, OR
FOWL. POPINJAY. WHITTLE. YAFFLE. YAFFER
YAPPINGALL. WOODSPITE. WOODWALL, OR WELE.

FIGURE 59.



WE have in England six species of Woodpeckers, namely, the Black, the Green, the Greater Spotted, the Lesser Spotted, the Hairy, and the Three-toed, but only the one above-named is at all common. It is a handsome bird, with green and brown plumage, prettily marked and barred with white; the bill is large and black, which colour extends over the sides of the head and part of the throat; there is a light-coloured rim round the eye, and a crest like a crimson cap, also a few feathers of the same rich colour set in the black patches of the throat. A truly handsome bird, rather awkward in appearance, on account of the shortness of the tail, and the large size of the feet, head, and bill. A shy, unsocial bird, too; not fond of exhibiting its beauties; for ever tap-tapping the hollow beech, or other tree, in the depth of the solitary woods; often heard but seldom seen, and when it is, in all sorts of inelegant positions, creeping up or down the rugged bole, clinging to the broken bough, crouching close, and peeping and peering into every hole and

crevice, in search of its favourite food—insects and their eggs, spiders, and grubs and caterpillars; and boring into the decayed bark with its hard wedge-shaped bill. The old poet Chaucer describes a very busy, inquisitive person as being

“ As prate and prying as a Woodpecker,
And ever inquiring upon everything.”

And Gisborne gives us a true picture of this restless and curious bird :—

“ With shrill and oft-repeated cry,
Her angular course, alternate rise and fall,
The Woodpecker prolongs; then to the trunk
Close clinging, with unwearied beak assails
The hollow bark; through every call the strokes
Roll the dire echoes, that from wintry sleep
Awake her insect prey; the alarmed tribes
Start from each chink that bores the mouldering stem;
Their scattered flight with lengthened tongue the foe
Pursues; joy glistens in her verdant plumes,
And brighter scarlet sparkles in her crest.”

We have here perhaps a little bit of what is called poetic licence; true, it has been said that the Woodpecker taps on the tree to alarm the insects lurking within, and make them come out to see what is the matter, but it is most likely done to ascertain which are the parts most unsound and pervious to the bill. In the above lines is an allusion to the shrill cry of the bird; this, heard amid the stillness of the wood, is perfectly startling; like a peal of unearthly laughter, it bursts forth and rings around; it has been compared to the syllables *glu, glu, glu, gluck!* finishing off with a

sharp *gk*, as though a laugh, had tumbled down and broken its neck, turning into something like a cry before it expired. Only just as you are thinking it is really dead and done for, out it bursts again louder than ever, and you listen aghast to

“The ringing of the Whitwall’s shrilly laughter.
Which echo follows after,”

but is never able to overtake. And we are here reminded of the long array of names with which this noisy fellow is honoured; a different one for almost every locality, and having reference mostly to the cry of the bird, or its singular habits. The scientific name is *Picus viridis*; the first signifying a Woodpecker, and the last green.

“The Woodpecker,” says Mudie, “is especially a bird of the ancient forests. You do not find it in the hedge or the coppice, where so many of the little birds, especially the summer migrants, build their nests, and spend their mid-days, when the reflections of the sun come bright on all sides of the foliage, in picking the soft caterpillars from the leaves, or capturing the insects that resort thither for the purpose of depositing fresh myriads; and when they have thus secured the shelter and beauty of their habitation, farewell the evening, and again hail the morning with their joyous songs. The aged tree is all to the Woodpecker, and he is much to the aged tree.” Yes, for he eats the insects which are revelling in its decay, and of the fine dust thereof he makes his nest, if nest it can be called, which is merely a hole in the trunk, high up, perhaps twenty

or thirty feet, lined with the small particles of rotten wood.


All the Woodpeckers lay white or nearly white eggs, and all, with whose habits we are acquainted, are early builders ; the common green species, found in most of the southern parts of Britain, commences making a new, or repairing its old nest as early as February ; the eggs are from four to eight in number. The young are hatched in June.



WRYNECK.

CUCKOO'S MATE, MAID, OR MESSENGER. RINDING,
SNAKE, TURKEY, BARLEY, OR TONGUE BIRD. EMMET-
HUNTER. LONG-TONGUE.

FIGURE 60.

 HIS bird, which appears to be a kind of connecting link between the Woodpeckers and Cuckoos, having some of the characteristics of both, is only a summer visitant of this country, generally arriving in April. Its scientific name is *Yunx torquilla*; the first is undoubtedly Greek, but its meaning is not very obvious; the second comes from *torqueo*—to turn or twist, and refers to a singular habit which the bird has of twisting its neck with a kind of slow undulating motion, like that of a snake; hence also the common English name Wryneck, and one or two others given above. The Welsh consider this the forerunner of the Cuckoo, and call it *gwas y gog*, or the Cuckoo's attendant. In the northern counties of England the common people call it Cuckoo's Maiden; it generally comes to us a few days in advance of that bird, as though it were deputed to prepare a place for it.

Although it can boast of no bright and gaudy colours, the Wryneck is a most elegant bird, both in shape and plumage.

"The embroidery of that vesture grey
No pen nor pencil can pourtray,"


says Bishop Mant. But it is seldom that one can get a good sight of its beautifully marked and mottled dress, for it is, like the Woodpecker, a shy and retiring bird; like that, too, it lays its eggs in a hole of a tree, lined with the decayed wood; they are six or seven in number generally, sometimes nine, and even ten have been found in one hole; the colour is a pure white, or slightly tinged and spotted with yellowish brown. The time of incubation is fourteen days, and the female is so much attached to the young birds, that she will often suffer herself to be taken rather than desert them. These birds resort to the same spot year after year; it is at various heights from the ground, and sometimes the deserted nest of a Woodpecker or other bird is used.



NUTHATCH.

NUT-JOBBER. WOODCRACKER.

FIGURE 61.

HE *Sittine* Birds, or Nuthatches, are little short-bodied creatures, with large heads, and very small tails; the bill is tolerably long, straight, and slender, pentagonal, or five-sided at the base, or part where it is inserted into the head. They are pretty lively birds, and seem to occupy a position between the *Certhias*, or Tree Creepers, and the *Parine* Birds or Tits. We have but one species in this country, known as the *Sitta Europæa*, or European Nuthatch; the generic name being derived, as Morris thinks, from some word in a primitive, or early language (from *primus*—first) from which also comes the term hatchet, and having reference to the habit of hacking and hewing at the nuts, on which this bird chiefly feeds.

The Nuthatch is not found generally throughout Britain, only in certain localities, and very rarely in the northern parts. It has long curved claws, by means of which it ascends the trunks of the trees, and clings about the branches much like the Creepers and Woodpeckers, frequently descending head downwards, which few other birds are able to do. It bores into the nuts with its strong pointed bill, and feeds upon the kernels; it also with the same instrument extracts the

insects from the holes and crevices, and thus varies its diet. Its motions are abrupt and jerking, so that it always appears in a desperate hurry, and it keeps up a constant *quit, quit*, as though giving warning to its landlady of an intention to leave its lodgings forthwith. Bewick says that it will pick bones, and that it lays up a store of food for the winter in various little granaries.

For a nesting-place it makes choice of some hole in a tree, which it lines with dried leaves, moss, scales of fir-cones, bits of bark, and, it may be, a little hair. If the entrance is too large it is partly closed up with clay, so as to leave but just room for the bird to enter. The eggs are from five to seven or eight, sometimes nine in number; they are greyish white, with spots or blotches of reddish brown.

The following interesting account of a pair of Nuthatches engaged in making their nest, is from the pen of a contributor to a periodical called 'The Naturalist;' the date of the occurrence was the 18th of April.—“The birds had fixed upon a hole in an ash tree, about twenty feet from the ground, and were contracting it with a plastering of mud, for which they flew to a small pond about fifty yards distant from the tree, and took pieces in their beaks about as big as a bean, which they laid on, and smoothed with their chin. Sometimes one of them would go inside and remain for a short time, I suppose for the purpose of smoothing the mud there. They would every now and then leave off from their task, and chase one another up the trunk and round the branches of the tree with amazing rapidity,


uttering all the while their flute-like whistle. They both seemed to take an equal share in the labour; and had, like the House Martin, small pieces of straw mixed with the mud, for the purpose of making it bind better. They seemed to be quite at ease on the ground, and hopped about much after the same manner as the Sparrow. The male bird was easily distinguishable by his brighter plumage.”



CUCKOO.

COMMON, OR GREY CUCKOO. GOWK, OR GECK. COG,
OF THE ANCIENT BRITISH.

FIGURE 62.

F the *Cuculine* Birds, or Cuckoos, none are permanently resident in countries subject to severe winter cold. They feed mostly on insects, worms, or soft fruit, gliding amid the trees in search of their food in a peculiarly rapid and noiseless manner. In passing from branch to branch they generally leap; they do not climb like the Woodpeckers and Creepers, although they have much the same conformation of feet, the outer toe being directed backwards, as well as the first; this is called *Zy-go-dac-ty-lous*, a Greek word, signifying that the toes are yoked, or in pairs, two before and two behind. We have thought it well to introduce this queer word to our readers, lest they should stumble over it, as they are likely to do, in many works on Natural History which they may consult, and be frightened at its uncouth appearance; they will now know what is meant by *zygodactylous*, or *dactytic* birds, such as Owls, Woodpeckers, Cuckoos, etc. But having explained thus much, we should go a step farther, and introduce also *A-ni-so-dac-ty-lous*, Greek again, meaning unequally yoked, that is, when there is a wider interval between one pair of toes than between the other.

Of Cuckoos the British Naturalist knows of three species; the Great Spotted Cuckoo, inhabiting chiefly the northern and western coasts of Africa, and only now and then paying a short visit to these northern climes; the Yellow-billed, or American Cuckoo, or Cowcow, as some call it, which is a more frequent, although a still rare visitant, and the Common Grey species, termed *Cuculus canorus*, that is, the Musical Cuckoo, with whose curious cry—*cuck-oooo*, most of our readers must be familiar. It may not be generally thought that there is much music in this *monotonous*, that is, single-toned call, but we are assured by a competent authority, that this is the only feathered performer who sings in strict accordance with musical numbers, its notes being the fifth and third of the diatonic scale. But be that as it may, the cry of the Cuckoo is extremely pleasant to most ears, when first heard, soon after the bird arrives in this country, which is sometimes about the middle of April, “in April come he will,” says the old proverb; we know that the fresh floral season of sunshine and country delights has fairly set in, and all through the summer, to the time of his departure, in August or September, we love to listen to the far-away, dreamy kind of call, for it seems like an invitation to ‘follow, follow,’ some invisible leader, through green woods and flowery dingles, and into scenes of quietude and peace; then, too, there is a kind of mystery about it which excites the curiosity, for who ever sees the utterer of these dreamy sounds. We are inclined to say with Wordsworth,—

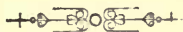
“Oh, Cuckoo, shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice.”

And indeed the Cuckoo is a flying and feathered marvel altogether ; we should fill this book were we to repeat all the strange tales that have been told about it, and by grave authorities too, from Aristotle of ancient Greece, to Dr. Jenner, and the rest of modern England, Amid all the disputations that have arisen upon the points of this bird's natural history, we can only clearly gather that it is a summer migrant, coming and going at the times just mentioned ; that while with us it is to be found in all wooded and sheltered parts of the island, frequenting most parks and pasture-grounds, groves and thickets, it is more likely to be seen at early morning and evening, than during the broad daylight, and its cry has been heard at all hours of the night, proving it to be somewhat nocturnal in its habits,—*nox*, you know, is the Latin for night, and from thence comes this word.

The Cuckoo lives almost entirely upon insects, devouring great numbers of hairy caterpillars. It makes no nest of its own, but lays a single egg in that of some other bird, or conveys it thither in its bill. Its eggs are small for the size of the bird, in colour white, with a greyish, or it may be a reddish tinge, with cinereous (that is, ashy) or grey brown speckles. How many of these the bird lays no one can tell, but it has the judgment, or compassion, or whatever it may be, to give the Pipit, Hedge Sparrow, Wagtail, or other small bird so favoured, the task of rearing but one of its young, which soon grows to be quite a monster in

the eyes of its foster parent, and sometimes, says the old Greek, Aristotle, eats her up; but this is just a physical impossibility, and a most vile slander. Whether the intruder, as Dr. Jenner says, *shovels* up with its broad back its fellow fledglings, to whom the nest rightfully belongs, and pitches them over the edge to die miserably of cold and starvation, while he gets the whole of the food brought by the provident mother, we cannot say, but may hope, for the credit of bird nature, that this too may be a mistake, if not a fable.


The Cuckoo is an elegantly formed and agreeably coloured bird, the prevailing tints of its plumage being a greenish grey, fading off into white, which is barred and mottled with silky brown; the large tail is spotted and edged with white. The male resembles the female; the young at first have bars of light red and olive brown about the upper parts.



KINGFISHER.

COMMON KING, OR KINGFISHER. GLAS Y DORIAN OF
THE ANCIENT BRITISH.

FIGURE 63.

HE Kingfishers belong to the order called *Jaculatrices*, or Darters, and to the family *Alcedinæ*; so they are *Alcedine* birds. These terms are not very easy of explanation. *Alcedo hispida* is the name of the Common Kingfisher. The second term may mean either rough, or hairy, or wet, all of which are quite applicable to this bird, which must be familiar to many of our readers; for although by no means common in any part of Britain, and very rare in the north, it is yet to be found, all the year through, in most parts of the country where there are streams of water, and river banks, and moist meadows suited to its habits, which are solitary. It generally nestles in holes in the declivities near to its favourite hunting ground—the clear stream, fringed with reeds and bulrushes, which glides away over pebbles that shine like gold and silver, and weeds as green as emeralds, or red as rubies, amid which dart the minnows and other small fish, on which, together with aquatic insects, the gorgeously-painted fisher feeds. You may see him in some quiet out-of-the-way place, beneath the shade of the grey alders, sitting motionless as a statue upon a branch of an old thorn, that projects over the stream.

It may be that a ray of sunshine finds its way between the shivering branches, and out flash the glorious tints of its plumage—red and green, and blue, and all changeable colours. Truly he is the monarch of fishing birds, and rightly named *Kingfisher*! Not handsome in form, certainly not elegant, nor well proportioned—with his short squat body and stump of a tail, thick neck, large head, and immense bill, little feet, that seem meant for a Sparrow, and eyes which, although bright and sharp enough, are much too small for the head. But he is a swift flier, for all that he looks so awkward; and see! quick as light he darts down upon that heedless fish that has come too near the surface, swallows it at a gulp, and is ready for another dart before you can look around you.

The eggs of our Common Kingfisher are what is termed broadly ovate in shape, that is, they are nearly round, not tapering out much, as some eggs do; they are simply white and semi (that is, half) transparent. The number is generally six or seven. They are laid some time in May, in a hole, often that of the water-rat, sometimes on the bare earth, but more frequently on a layer of small fish bones; now and then on a little dried grass. The note of the bird is sharp, shrill, and piping, like that of the Sandpipers, but it is not often uttered.



SWALLOW.

RED-FRONTED, COMMON, OR CHIMNEY SWALLOW.

FIGURE 64.



THE *Hirundine* Birds, or Swallows, form a very distinct group; they have slender bodies, and large, powerful wings, which enable them to fly with great velocity, skimming over the moist meadows, where their insect food most abounds, and wheeling and circling about trees and buildings in a swift and easy manner, which appears to be the very perfection of motion. They are all migratory birds, coming to us from Africa and the south of Europe to breed, and returning to those warm climates to pass the winter.

The Common Swallow, called by naturalists *Hirundo rustica*, the first word signifying a swallow, and the second, of, or belonging to the country, generally arrives in Britain in the latter half of the month of April, or the beginning of May, some time in which month the nest is commenced; it is of a broad cup-like shape, and is formed of moist earth, collected bit by bit from the side of a pond or stream, and moulded together with straw and grass: there is a lining of feathers, or some other soft materials. The situations chosen are sheltered spots beneath eaves or projecting roofs of any kind, shafts of mines, holes in the sides of pits and quarries, old wells and out-buildings, bell turrets, the under sides of spouts and bridge arches; most usually

the spot selected is near human habitations. Who is not awakened in the bright summer mornings by the twittering of the young birds near his bed-room window? These birds have frequently been known to build in empty unused rooms, to which access could be gained through a broken pane of glass; they are said to nestle near chimneys for the sake of the warmth, being apparently not at all annoyed by the smoke which issues thence.

The eggs of the Swallow are usually from four to six in number; they are white, thickly speckled over with ash-coloured, dark red, or brown spots. Morris says that two broods are frequently hatched in the year, the first of which flies in June, and the second in August. It is most interesting to see the parent birds tempting them on from one resting point to another, and so teaching them to use their wings, feeding them in a most dexterous manner while on the wing; it is said that these careful parents, ere the young can provide for themselves, bring them food about once in every three minutes throughout the day. The male Swallow is a handsome bird, the wings, long forked tail, head, neck, and upper part of the breast being brownish black, with a steely blue reflection, which is only seen in certain lights. The forehead and throat are chestnut, and there is a tinge of the same on the delicate white under parts of the body. Undoubtedly a handsome bird, and one of the most familiar of our feathered friends while it remains with us, which is until the autumn is fairly set in. You may know when the Swallows are about to leave by their frequent consulta-

tions on the roofs, and by the more frequent utterance of their low and not unmelodious warble, which is very different from the short, sharp cry, consisting of two notes, which they utter occasionally when hawking, as it is called, after insects.

Previous to their departure they may be frequently observed wheeling in rapid circles in the air, as if trying their wings, and drilling for their long, and no doubt orderly fight. We might quote plenty of poetry on this bird, for its beauty, grace of motion, and familiarity with man, have made it ever a general favorite, but for want of sufficient space we shall not be able to make use of any. In some allusion is made to a notion once entertained even by scientific naturalists, that the Swallows did not actually leave this country in the cold season, but *hybernated*, as it is called, from the Latin *hyems*—winter; that is, wintered here, passing the time in a state of torpor, or sleep, somewhere out of sight, as the dormouse and some other animals do. But it is now certainly known that this is a false impression; a few young or sickly birds, unable to endure so long a journey, may be, and no doubt are, left behind; these constitute but an exception to the rule of annual migration.




MARTIN.

WHITE-RUMPED, WINDOW, HOUSE, OR MARTIN SWALLOW.

MARTINET. HOUSE OR WINDOW MARTIN. MARTLETT.

FIGURE 65.



THIS is the *Hirundo urbica* of naturalists, the latter term coming from the Latin *urbs*—a city. Its plumage is of a more decided purple tint than the Common Swallow, from which it is also distinguished by the absence of chestnut brown on the forehead, throat, and under parts, which in this species are pure white. In its habits the Martin closely resembles its congeners, than which it is, perhaps, even more a house and city bird; hence its specific name. It reaches our island generally a few days later than the Swallow, and departs at about the same time

The eggs of this bird are four or five in number, of a longish oval shape, smooth, and perfectly white. The nest, which is composed of mud, so cemented and tempered that it will adhere even to glass, is lined with hay or feathers. Gilbert White, in his 'Natural History of Selborne,'—a delightful book which all young naturalists should read, says that there are generally young birds in the nest up to Michaelmas, there being two broods, and sometimes even three, in the year; the first brood are generally ready to fly by the latter end of May, and the second early in August: the period of incubation is thirteen days.

SWIFT.

COMMON, OR BLACK SWIFT. BLACK, OR SCREECH MARTIN. SWIFT - SWALLOW. DEVELING SCREECH. SCREAMER. SQUEALER. CRAN. MARTIN DU, OF THE ANCIENT BRITISH.

FIGURE 66.



LIKE the rest of our Swallows, this is a migratory bird, and it remains with us a shorter time than most of the others, generally arriving in May, and departing in August. Its scientific name is *Hirundo apus*, meaning a Swallow without a foot, derived no doubt from the small size of the feet, and the little use it seems to make of them, being almost constantly in the air, where its evolutions are peculiarly rapid and graceful, even for one of its family. The rapidity with which it skims and dashes along, wheeling and turning in the most sudden manner, is truly marvellous; so great is the force of its forward impetus, that it has been known to kill itself by dashing against a wall; it has been estimated that Wild Ducks fly ninety miles an hour, and Swallows rather more, but the Swift above two hundred miles an hour; this may possibly be an exaggeration, but if we make a large allowance, say one half, the rate of progress is something astounding.

The note of the Swift is a harsh scream, hence several of the common names by which it is known; it is generally uttered while pursuing its insect prey on the wing, and may be considered as an exclamation of triumph or delight, as much as to say—"Ha, ha, I have caught you!"

The Swift resorts much to ruinous castles, steeples, towers, and precipitous rocks, for the purpose of building; sometimes it nestles under the eaves of cottages and barns, or in holes in walls, and hollow trees, &c. The nest is rudely formed of sticks and straws stuck together with mud; the materials are picked up with great dexterity while the bird is on the wing, and sometimes, it is said, the Sparrow or other small bird is robbed of its goods and chattels by the impudent stranger, which snatches them up, and is gone like a flash of lightning.

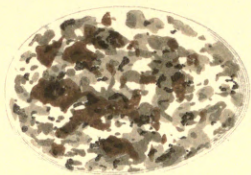
The eggs are white, of a longish oval shape, and seldom more than two or three in number.

This bird, like the rest of the Swallows, is pretty widely diffused over the country during the time it remains here; it has a near relative called the White-bellied or Alpine Swift, which is common in the south of Europe, but which seldom comes so far north as this. There are also belonging to this family of *gliders*, as they are sometimes called, the Purple and Sand Martins, which are placed among British Birds; the former is common in America, but rare with us, the latter, the smallest of the family, are not unfrequently found in Britain.

The whole plumage of the Common Swift, with the exception of a greyish white patch under the chin, is blackish brown, with a bronzy green tinge, which greatly relieves its otherwise dull appearance.



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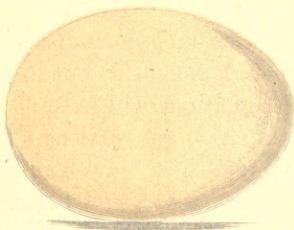
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NIGHTJAR.

GOATSUCKER. EUROPEAN OR NOCTURNAL GOATSUCKER.
 DOG, OR NIGHT-HAWK. FERN, CHURN, OR JAR-OWL.
 NIGHT-JAR, OR NIGHT-CHAR. WHEELBIRD. PUCK-
 ERIDGE. RHODWR AND ADERYN Y DROELL, OF THE
 ANCIENT BRITISH.

FIGURE 67.



O the above long list of names, we might add two or three others by which different naturalists distinguish this remarkable bird, but the most common of its scientific designations will be sufficient; this is *Caprimulgus Europæus*, the first name being derived from the Latin *caper*—a goat, and *mulgio*—to milk; it having been at one time supposed that the poor innocent bird was in the habit of sucking the teats of the goats to obtain their milk; and there are, we believe, some ignorant persons in out-of-the-way country-places, who still give credence to this absurd notion, and even fancy that the udders of the cows, as they lie asleep, are drained by that feathered depredator, as they consider the Churn Owl to be. From this supposed habit of the bird, and the whirring or jarring noise which it makes when flying are derived most of the names given above.

The Goatsucker flies chiefly by night, and is oftener heard than seen; *whirr, whirr, whirr* it goes, like a

spinning-wheel, and the sound is interrupted every now and then by a shrill whistle or scream, or a softer cry, *dec, dec*, which it generally utters when getting on the wing. White, of Selborne, says, that when a person approaches the haunt of the Fern Owls, in an evening, they continue flying round the head of the intruder, and by striking their wings together across their backs, in the manner that the pigeons called Smiters are known to do, make a smart snap. He thinks it likely that this is done by way of menace, to scare those who are approaching their young. This author also observes, that the powers of flight of this bird are truly wonderful, exceeding, if possible, in graceful ease and celerity, even those of the Swallow, than which it is a much larger bird.

Its plumage is remarkably soft and downy, like that of the Owl, and is prettily marked and mottled, the colours being brown, yellow, and grey of various shades. The eye is large and hawk-like, the bill small, the mouth capable of great distension, and fringed with small feathers, which have a very curious appearance.

The Goatsucker is pretty common throughout the whole of England, but more so in the south than the north; it is a migratory bird, arriving towards the middle or end of May and departing in September. It chiefly inhabits woods, moors, heaths, and commons, especially where fern and brushwood abound. Its food consists chiefly of moths, beetles, and such insects as are most frequently met with on the wing in the morning and evening twilight.

The nest consists of a few dead leaves huddled to-

gether in some hollow in the ground, among the heath, long grass, or fern; it is frequently found at the foot of a furze or other bush. The eggs, two or three in number, are of a perfect oval shape, beautifully clouded and streaked with grey and light brown on a white ground; they are laid in the beginning of July, in about the middle of which month the young are generally hatched.



RING DOVE.

RINGED DOVE, OR CUSHAT. QUEST, OR CUSHIE.
WOOD PIGEON.

FIGURE 68.



OF the *Columbine* birds, or Doves, we have in this country four distinct species, three of which are permanent residents, and one a summer migrant. There is also a member of the family, although classed in a different genus, of which a few specimens have been taken in this country, namely, the Passenger Pigeon of North America. All these are extremely beautiful birds, and general favourites on that account, as well as for their pleasing habits and manners, which have mainly contributed to make the name of the Dove synonymous with all that is gentle, and peaceable, and loveable. It was a Dove, we may remember, which first gave to Noah assurance that the waters had subsided from the earth, by returning to the ark with an olive leaf in its beak, since which, both bird and plant have ever been emblematical of peace; and it is under the mystic semblance of a dove, that we find the Holy Spirit personated in Scripture.

The particular species above named is termed by most naturalists *Columba palumbus*, the first term meaning a Dove or Pigeon, and the second a Wood Pigeon, which, in this country, is its most common appellation, although it is also frequently called the Ring Dove or

Cushat. This truly elegant bird occurs throughout the whole of Great Britain and Ireland, frequenting most the cultivated and wooded districts, where it does a good deal of mischief by feeding upon the wheat, peas, barley, and other agricultural produce; it also partakes freely of beech-mast and acorns; it is *graminivorous*, that is, feeding on grass; as well as *granivorous*—feeding on grain. Its favourite resting-place is amid the thick branches of tall trees, especially beech, ash, and pine, in which most frequently its nest will be found; just a few twigs, loosely put together in a circular form; it is generally from sixteen to twenty feet from the ground.

The eggs are two in number, of a pure white colour, and of a roundish form. Three broods are sometimes produced in a season, the first of which is generally abroad by the beginning of May, and the second about the end of July. The period of incubation is sixteen or seventeen days.

All must be familiar with the soft *coo coo* of this shy bird; heard in the summer woodlands, it falls on the ear with a particularly soothing effect. In the winter it congregates in large flocks, the number of the permanent residents being then much increased by fresh arrivals from the continent; and very beautiful they look, flying about amid the snow, in their greyish blue plumage, ornamented with black and white, green and purple, and suffused on the breast with a reddish flush, as though the light of the setting sun were shining on them.

STOCK DOVE.

BLUE-BACKED OR WOOD DOVE.

FIGURE 69.



OLUMBA *Ænos* is the scientific name of this species. The first term, as you are aware, means simply a Dove. the etymology of the second is not so clear, most likely it comes from *oinos*—relating to wine, and alludes to the ruddy or vinous tinge of the breast. This is a somewhat stouter bird in the body than the last, and it wants the white patches which so vary and enliven the plumage of the Ring Dove, than which it is less elegant, although, perhaps, its plumage is more rich and splendid, with that shifting play of golden green and violet which all the Doves, and some other of the feathered tribes present. But for this, the plumage of our Stock Dove (so called, it is said, because it is the original stock from which our common domestic Pigeons are derived), would be considered plain and dull; it is chiefly greyish blue, deepening at parts into purple, and flushed here and there with deep red; the legs of this, as of most Doves and Pigeons, are light red, and the bill light brown or yellowish.

“The Stock Dove builds in the old oak wood,”

says Mary Howitt, in her beautiful song of the Phea-

sant, and so no doubt it often does; but more frequently, perhaps, in the fir plantation, or among the beeches, or any other trees that present a suitable resting-place; a hole in the trunk is frequently chosen, it may be only four or five, or as many as forty or fifty feet from the ground. Sometimes the flat and shallow nest, just a few sticks loosely put together, is placed on the ground itself, in a deserted rabbit-burrow, or some other hollow place; beneath furze bushes it is occasionally found, and even in hedges and fruit trees near to woods and coppices.

Nidification commences about the end of March or beginning of April; incubation lasts about seventeen days, and in a month from the time of hatching the young are ready to fly. There are two or three broods in the year. The eggs are white, somewhat smaller than those of the Ring Dove, and more pointed at the smaller end. The parent birds sit very close, and will often allow themselves to be taken off by the hand; they evince great attachment for their young, as well as for each other, and although several pairs may build within a very limited space, they do not appear to quarrel; indeed gentleness and tenderness is the main characteristic of all their motions, as well as of their soft notes, the old familiar *coo, coo, coo*. In winter they consort with the Ring Doves, but are not perhaps so numerous in this country as these birds. They migrate from place to place, and feed on hemp, rape, and other seeds, young shoots of plants, berries, beech-mast, acorns, and grain.

ROCK DOVE.

WHITE-BACKED DOVE. WILD, OR ROCK PIGEON.

FIGURE 70.



SCIENTIFIC name *Columba licia*; the latter name probably from *livida*—livid, blue, or lead-coloured. It is held by some that this species, and not the Stock Dove, has the best claim to be considered the original of the Common Pigeon; others have confounded the species, although there appears to be a very clear mark of distinction in the white patch over the tail, which is never absent, the broad black band across the grey wings, and the more deep and distinct marking of the plumage altogether. Besides, the habits of this bird differ considerably from those of either of the other species.

It is, as its name implies, a haunter of rocks, in the crevices and caverns of which it generally builds its rude nest of twigs, and grass, and stalks of plants. It is a social bird, building in companies; the first eggs, two in number, and white, are generally laid about the middle of April, and the last towards the latter end of August; the young are fledged in about three weeks, and after that, a few days' training by their parents, enables them to fly and obtain their own livelihood. They feed like their congeners, and are great grain-eaters, only at times varying this kind of food with a few snails. Like all the Doves they are swift flyers.

TURTLE DOVE.

RING-NECKED TURTLE.

FIGURE 71.



HIS is perhaps the most beautiful, as it is also the smallest and rarest of our native Doves; naturalists term it *Columba turtur*, of which its English name is simply a translation; sometimes the specific name *auritus*—golden, is applied to it, and this well describes the plumage of the bird, which has a rich golden tinge throughout most parts of the plumage, the chief colours of which are brown and grey, running off into yellow and white, flushed at places with red, and elegantly marked with black.

With us, the Turtle Dove is migratory, generally arriving towards the latter end of April, and departing early in September; it is pretty much confined to the southern and eastern counties, but few specimens having been found in Scotland. It frequents the wooded districts both hilly and flat, flies in small flocks, and feeds on grain and seeds, peas, of which it is particularly fond, and sometimes small slugs and snails; being fond of drinking and bathing, it is commonly found in the neighbourhood of streams and brooks; in such situations may its soft note, *tur, tur*, doubtless the origin of its name, be frequently heard, when the shy bird itself is hidden amid the thick shade of the leafy boughs.

Mr. Morris tells us that the nest is so slight and carelessly constructed that the eggs may frequently be seen from below; it is generally placed at some distance from the ground, ten or twenty feet, and is commonly well concealed among the foliage. The glossy white eggs, two in number, and of a narrow oval form, are generally laid about the middle of May, and the young birds come forth in sixteen or seventeen days: there are two or three broods in the year.

The prophet Jeremiah, we may remember, speaks of this as a migratory bird, "Yea, the Stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the Turtle, and the Crane, and Swallow observe the time of their coming." The soft note of the bird is also spoken of by Solomon as one of the signs of returning spring, "For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the Turtle is heard in our land."



PHEASANT.

COMMON OR RING-NECKED PHEASANT.

FIGURE 72.



THIS glorious bird is the *Phasianus Colchicus* of naturalists, the first term meaning a Pheasant, and the second of Colchis, the ancient name of a country of Asia Minor, whence it is said the bird was originally brought into Europe, by the old Greek navigators, called the argonauts, say some—those who in the ship *Argo* sailed the seas under the command of Jason, and went through a series of surprising adventures connected with the bearing away of a certain *golden fleece* from the King of Colchis, all of which are faithfully reported in the mythology, for the admiration and belief of the credulous. Certain it is that if Jason had not with him such a treasure as a golden fleece, he had in the Pheasant a golden bird, if there really ever was such a person, and he did in reality bring the splendid king of the English preserves into Europe.

A description of the bird's gorgeous plumage we need not attempt, as all of our readers must have seen it hanging up in the poulterers' shops, if they have not been startled by the sudden *whirr* of its wings as it rose from the fern-brake or thicket at their approach, as

they wandered amid the green woods where it delights to dwell.

The nest of this bird consists of merely a few leaves placed in a slight depression on the ground, sometimes in the open field near to a preserve or plantation, but more frequently among the underwood, in long grass and in hedge-rows; frequently the situation chosen is beneath boughs that have been felled, or have fallen from the tree. The laying of the eggs commences in April or May; incubation lasts from twenty-four to twenty-six days; the number sat upon varies from six up to as many as fourteen; more than this have been found in one nest, but it was not likely to have been the produce of a single hen; the colour of the eggs is pale olive brown, covered all over with very small dots of a deeper tint. Poachers are ever on the look-out for these eggs, as a sitting of them fetches a high price; they are generally, when taken from the nest, placed under a common hen to be hatched. Some have been found of a greyish white tinged with green. It is said that Partridges are sometimes expelled from their nests by these birds, which will sit upon their own eggs, and those of the rightful owner of the nest, and hatch them all.

Generally speaking, the Pheasant is a shy wary bird, and with good reason, being such an object of pursuit with sportsmen, as well as unlicensed depredators; but where secured from molestation and well fed, it becomes bold and familiar. Its general food is grain of various kinds, peas, beans, nuts, and berries, shoots and leaves of several plants, roots, and insects:

it is particularly partial to sunflower seeds and buck-wheat.

The variety called the Ring-necked Pheasant is distinguished by a clear ring of white round the neck; there is also a variety known as the Bohemian Pheasant, which is of a stone-colour prettily marked and mottled with black and brown. White and cream-coloured ones occasionally occur.



BLACK GROUSE.

BLACK GAME. BLACK COCK. FEMALE—GREY OR BROWN
HEN.

FIGURE 73.



THE meaning of the generic name of this bird—*Tetrao*, is by no means clear, neither is that of its specific name *tetrix*: are they not both derived from the Hindostanee word *Tetur*? is the query of Morris, who does not tell us what this *tetur* means.

The Black Grouse, conspicuous for its large size, glossy black plumage, forked tail, turning out like the flakes of an anchor, and noble bearing, is, with the exception of its near relative, the Capercaillie, or Cock of the Woods, now only to be found in some of the Scottish forests, the largest of our native game birds. It is found chiefly in Scotland, where it frequents those parts where there is a good growth of underwood or heather, or other thick vegetation, and also plenty of water, which appears to be necessary to its existence. It is also found in many of the English counties, being tolerably plentiful in Yorkshire and Northumberland, and about Windermere, in Westmoreland. It feeds on juniper and most other berries, and wild fruits, heather-twigs, and young shoots of many plants; the tops of grasses, rushes, sedge, and buds of trees, turnip and rape leaves, and even the young fronds of the fern.

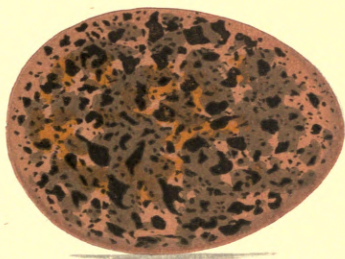
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The nest, which is placed in some marshy spot among heath, or in plantations or hedge-rows, amid the rank vegetation, is composed of grass or twigs, neatly laid but not woven together. The eggs are from five to eight or ten in number; the colour is reddish yellow, in some nearly white; they are irregularly spotted with reddish brown: they are generally laid in May.

A fine full-grown Black Cock will weigh nearly four pounds; and the Grey Hen, which has a sober dress of brown and grey prettily intermixed, about half this weight. They are birds much valued as table delicacies; and every year immense numbers are shot by eager sportsmen, who leave the desk and the counter, the senate-house and the drawing-room, to roam amid the Scottish moors and mountains, and undergo fatigues and privations with an endurance and perseverance worthy of a better cause.



RED GROUSE.

GOR, OR MOOR-COCK. MOOR, OR MUIR-FOWL. RED-GAME.
RED, OR BROWN PTARMIGAN.

FIGURES 74 & 75.



TETRAO, or *Lagopus Scoticus*, is the scientific name of this species; the meaning of the first term is already explained, the second comes from *Lagos*—a hare, and *pous*—a foot, and is given to this bird because it has the lower joints of the leg, and even the toes, feathered, differing in this respect from the other kinds of Grouse. *Scoticus* means Scotch, and indicates the country in which the species most abounds, although it is also found in various parts of England and Wales; it is, however, peculiar to Great Britain, and therefore the name *Britannicus* has been suggested as a more appropriate generic name for it.

The Red Grouse is, perhaps, the most highly prized of all game birds, and the wonder is that it continues so abundant, notwithstanding the annual slaughter which takes place in its breeding and feeding grounds, which are mostly the open moors and hill-sides, where there is plenty of heath and ling, and other low-growing plants of the like nature. It is especially partial to the heather, which affords it both shelter and food. It also feeds on various grasses and mountain berries, and grain when its home is near cultivated districts, which it generally, however, avoids, retiring as far as possible

from the presence of man, as though it knew and feared him as its greatest enemy.

The nest of the Muir Cock, as the Scotch call it, is formed of heather and grass, with a few of the soft downy feathers of the bird, and is placed in a hollow of the ground among the heath. The first eggs are laid in March or April; they are usually six or seven in number, although sometimes they amount to twelve and even more; they vary considerably in colour, the ground being usually a greyish white, with more or less of a reddish brown or yellow tinge. They are thickly dotted or clouded with dark grey and brown; the shape is a regular oval.


The Heath Poults, as the young are called, leave the nest directly they are hatched, as do most of the game birds, and are very soon able to fly. At first they lie close, and may almost be trodden upon, but they get more wild and wary as the shooting season advances; this commences in August.



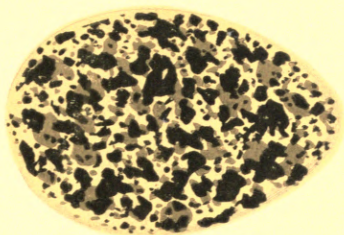
PTARMIGAN.

WHITE GAME, OR GROUSE. IN GAELIC, PTARMICHAN.

FIGURE 76.

ICH as is the plumage of the Red Grouse, with its beautiful markings and warm sienna tint, which prevails throughout every part except the snowy legs, yet we are inclined to give the preference to this, its close relative, for elegance of appearance. It is all over of a pure delicate white, except just the points of the toes, the larger tail feathers, the bill, and a patch on each side of the head, which surrounds the eye, all of black; there is also, as in every other species of Grouse with which we are acquainted, a semicircular patch, like a piece of crimson velvet over each eye. The edges of the white feathers are delicately pencilled, as we see them in the Silver Pheasant, so that they appear perfectly distinct from each other. This is the winter dress, according well with the snowy regions which the bird chiefly inhabits. In summer the plumage in parts becomes brown and yellowish grey of different shades, this dress also assimilating well with the lichen-covered rocks of those Alpine solitudes where the Ptarmigan must be sought. With us it is found only in the Grampians, and others of the Scottish mountains; there it dwells in seldom-disturbed security, feeding upon such plants as grow in these elevated places, in winter descending lower, to obtain a

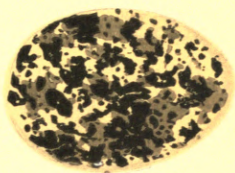
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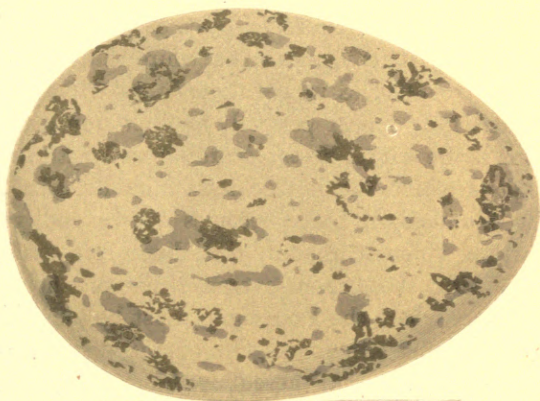
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better supply of food, but never venturing into the plain.

Its eggs, which vary from seven to twelve in number, are sometimes laid on the bare earth, under the shadow of a rock or some plant; their colour is white, with sometimes a green, yellow, or reddish tinge; they are blotted and spotted with dark brown. The laying does not commence until June; incubation lasts three weeks. The young at first feed on insects.

The scientific name of this bird is *Tetrao lagopus*, the meaning of which has already been explained, and *Lagopus vulgaris*, that is, common, or *mutus*—changeable, in allusion to the variation in the colour of the plumage.



PARTRIDGE.

COMMON OR GREY PARTRIDGE.

FIGURE 77.



HIS is one of the best-known and most esteemed of our native game birds; its scientific name is *Perdix cinerea*, the first term meaning a Partridge, and the last ash coloured, the prevailing tint of the plumage of this species being ashy-grey and brown, with a reddish tinge throughout. Beautifully marked and mottled is the dress of the plump little Partridge, as our readers know well—delicately barred, and pencilled, and variegated, as if to show what glorious effects may be produced with two or three colours only.

Partridges are tolerably plentiful in nearly all parts of Great Britain, where cultivation has smoothed the rugged features of the landscape; for, unlike the Grouse, which retreat as man advances further and further into the wilds of nature, these birds seldom go far from the farm and the home plantations. Coveys, as the family parties are called, are sometimes met with on the edges of moors, and they often wander, as Mr. Morris tells us, to wastes and commons; but their home is not there; the clover, turnip, grass, or stubble field, is their cover and resting-place; there and in the coppice and along the hedge-row they feed and build their nests, if the placing a few loose straws in a hole scratched in the ground can be called building; there they lay their

eggs, generally ten or twelve in number, although sometimes more, and of a uniform pale greenish-brown colour. Early in the spring, from the first to the middle of February, may the not unpleasing call, *chieurr*, *chicurr*, of these birds be heard; and towards the end of May or the beginning of June, the nest will most likely be quite finished. The hen bird alone sits, the male keeping watch, and, when the covey are hatched, assisting to feed and protect them from their numerous foes. The chicks run directly they are out of the shell, frequently with portions of it sticking to them; they are very lively and nimble, and so escape many dangers. But one brood is reared in the year, unless the first eggs are broken, in which case others will be laid, and the work of incubation recommenced, although the eggs will be less in number, and the young, it is said, weaker. It is related by Mr. Jesse as a curious fact, that "when young partridges are hatched, and have left the nest, the two portions of the shell will be found placed one within the other." We have observed this in eggs of the Common Fowl, and believe with the above-named naturalist that it is done by the chicks themselves, in their effort to escape from their confinement.



QUAIL.

COMMON OR WANDERING QUAIL.

FIGURE 78.



THE Quail can scarcely be called a common bird with us, although it may be found occasionally in various parts of both England and Ireland, and sometimes, though very rarely, in Scotland. It is migratory, generally arriving in May and departing in September; some few remain throughout the year, and, scraping together a few bits of dry grass, clover, or straw, make a rude nest in a hollow place on the ground, and there deposit their eggs, which are of a yellowish-, greenish-, or reddish-white, blotched and speckled with brown. They vary in number from six to fourteen, and even, it is said, twenty; the most common number is ten. The period of incubation is about three weeks; the young, like Partridges, run as soon as hatched.

The Common Quail is a plump little bird, not much unlike the Partridge in its form, colours, and markings; but the head and throat are curiously barred with black and white, and the distinct patch of the latter colour beneath the chin gives the bird a very peculiar appearance. Naturalists call this species *Perdix coturnix*, the former term meaning a Partridge, and the latter a Quail.

This is thought by some to be the bird with which the children of Israel were fed in the wilderness, as mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, and the immense flocks which pass from country to country in the migratory seasons, render the supposition likely. It is said in Numbers xi, 31, that "There went forth a wind from the Lord and brought Quails from the sea;" and it is well known that the direction of the wind will often determine the flight of these birds. As many as one hundred thousand are said to have been taken in one day in the kingdom of Naples after an unusually exhausting flight over the Mediterranean; thousands of dozens are sent every year into the London market, where they are eagerly purchased: their flesh is esteemed a great delicacy.


Quails are desperate fighters, and in some countries are kept especially for the cruel "sport," as it is called, which their pugnacious propensities afford. They feed upon grain, seeds, young leaves, and insects; and have a shrill whistling note like *whit, whit*, which is called "piping."



BUSTARD.

COMMON OR BEARDED BUSTARD.

FIGURE 79.

 F you can fancy a bird in general conformation something between an Ostrich and a Goose, you will have a pretty fair notion of the Great Bustard—*Otis tarda* as naturalists call it, the first term meaning a Bustard, and the second slow or lazy; yet lazy as he may be, this long-legged stalker is by no means slow in his movements when once roused to action; he runs with great swiftness, and, when he does take wing, which he appears to do with difficulty, has a strong and sustained flight. This is now a very rare species in Great Britain, although once plentiful, according to old writers, who state that it was customary with greyhounds

“To hunt the Bustards in the fens.”

A tall, strong, and stately bird is this, slow and sedate in its general manners and movements, frequenting plains, and heaths, and open moors, where it can have a wide range of vision, and so be aware of the approach of an enemy. The gradual extension of cultivation over its favourite places of resort, and the incessant war waged against it by sportsmen, anxious to bag such a noble head of game, have nearly driven it from

our island. A specimen was shot as late as January, 1856, near Hungerford, in Berkshire.

The prevailing colours in the plumage of the Great Bustard are white or bluish grey, and yellowish or orange brown, with black mottlings; the legs and beak are dark horn colour; underneath the chin is a plume of narrow feathers, falling backwards, and partly covering the front and sides of the neck; they are six or seven inches long, and very light and graceful.

The Bustards are called *graminivorous*, but are somewhat omnivorous feeders; mice, frogs, worms, and young birds are occasionally added to their usual vegetable diet. We have a species called the Little Bustard, much smaller than the one we have been describing, and also a very rare bird. The eggs of both these species are great treasures to collectors; those of the larger kind are like what our artist has represented, of an olive brown colour, clouded and spotted with ash and rust colour. They are generally two in number, laid on the bare earth, or in a hollow carefully lined with corn stalks or grass; the length is nearly three inches. The eggs of the Little Bustard are more decidedly green, with ashy or dull brown variations.



GOLDEN PLOVER.

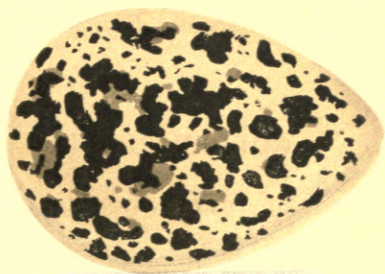
WHISTLING, YELLOW, GREEN, GREY, OR BLACK-BREASTED
PLOVER.

FIGURE 80.

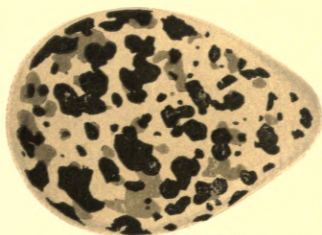


F the *Pluveline* Birds, or Plovers, we have several species in this country, and the one above named is the commonest. Naturalists call it *Pluvialis aurea*, the first term meaning a Plover, and signifying rainy, or pertaining to rain, and the last golden, or *Charadrius pluvialis*. Of the meaning of this generic name we are obliged to confess our ignorance; by some it is applied to all the Plovers, and by others to the Sand Plovers only. This Golden species is a very remarkable bird, both in its habits and appearance; all the under parts of the body, the breast, throat, and sides of the head up to and above the eyes, are of a deep velvet black; then comes all round an edging of white, which deepens into grey tinged with yellow; and then again all over the back, pinions, tail, and top of the head, are black feathers, beautifully bordered and barred with what appears to be gold embroidery. It is a nimble, active bird, constantly running about on the open plains and ploughed fields in search of food, which consists of insects of various kinds, green corn, and leaves of vegetables, small berries, &c.; or in flying hither and thither in the air, now close to the ground, as if about to settle, and then with a sudden upward

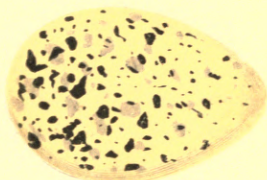
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wheel urging a strong and swift flight to some distant part of the field or sea shore, which is a favourite resort in winter, where the birds collect in large flocks, uttering their wild shrill whistle, which harmonises well with the sounds of the winds and waves.

The Golden Plover may be found all over Britain, where it remains throughout the year, generally resorting to the heaths, downs, or marshes, to breed. Its nest is merely a few stems of grass and vegetable fibres, laid in a slight hollow in the ground, just about large enough to contain the eggs, which are usually four in number, of a yellowish stone colour, blotted and spotted with brownish black. They are generally placed with great regularity, with the smaller ends meeting in the centre; they are laid early in June. The young leave the nest as soon as hatched, and are able to support themselves in a month or five weeks.



DOTTEREL.

DOTTREL. DOTTEREL PLOVER.

FIGURE 81.



THIS, the *Charadrius morinellus* of naturalists, is another lively and beautiful bird, more so, perhaps, than the species last described, having greater variety and more distinct markings in the plumage. The crown and sides of the head are black, with a white band proceeding from above each eye, running down into a point, and nearly meeting another band from the back of the head; the throat is white, tinged and spotted with grey, which is the colour of the breast, which is divided from the orange-coloured belly by a broad waved band of white; black and bright yellow complete the under parts; the back, wings, and tail are brown and black, the larger feathers being distinctly edged with golden yellow.

“The Dotterel,” says Morris, “has acquired the character of being a foolish bird, hence its English name from the word to dote, and its Latin one from the word *morio*—a foolish fellow. The bird was formerly supposed to imitate the actions of the fowler, and so to fall into the trap, instead of providing for its escape by a timely flight.”

The Dotterel, which is a migratory bird, frequents open and exposed situations, wide heaths, and barren

mountainous districts, where it generally breeds, Any hollow in the ground serves it for a nest, which is composed of a few lichens, not woven, but merely laid together. The eggs are seldom more than three in number; they are generally laid in June; the colour is deep yellowish-brown, or it may be a fine grey, thickly spotted, especially about the darker end, with dark or reddish-brown and deep grey.



RINGED PLOVER.

RING, OR STONE PLOVER. RINGED DOTTEREL. SAND
LARK, OR LAVROCK. DULL-WILLY. SANDY-LOO.

FIGURE 82.

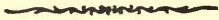


HARADRIUS hiaticula is the scientific name of this species ; we have already confessed our ignorance of the meaning of the first term ; according to the old naturalist Pliny, it is “ a bird the seeing of which cures those that have the jaundice ;” but we must say that we are extremely doubtful if the sight of any bird included by modern naturalists in the genus *Charadrius* would have such a wonderful effect. The Latin dictionary tells us that the term comes from the Greek, and that one of its meanings is *terræ fissura*, which we may translate furrowed earth ; so that the name may have reference to the bird’s real or supposed habit of haunting the furrows of the ploughed field, or the rough uneven ground of rocky shores or barren places. With regard to the specific name *hiaticula*, we have something very like it in English—*hiatus*, a break, an aperture, or opening ; the Latin word from which it comes is precisely similar. Why applied to this bird we cannot tell, except it be from its being chiefly found on broken and uneven ground.

The Ring Plover, or Dotterel, is altogether a shore bird, and may be found on most parts of the British

coast, and along the margins of the creeks, estuaries, and tidal rivers, and sometimes by the inland lakes and ponds. It is a bright lively creature, with party-coloured plumage of black, brown, and white. It plays about on the sands, following the retiring tide; and fleeing before its advance, as we see children do; its silky feathers ruffled by the wind, and its shrill clear whistle making pleasant music amid the rocks, and over the wide wild ocean scenery. Its eggs are laid in some slight natural hollow in the sand or small gravel, sheltered by a tuft of reeds or coarse herbage, sometimes just above high-water mark, but frequently in the marshy grounds further inland; they are four in number, of a greenish-grey, buff, or cream-colour, spotted and streaked with grey and black, or dark brown.

These birds generally pair in May; the male and female both sit on the eggs, and are very careful of them and the young. Their general food is worms, marine and other aquatic insects, shrimps, and small crustaceous animals. On moonlight nights they may be seen searching diligently with quick and incessant movements, their white plumes flashing here and there like silver.



LAPWING.

COMMON, CRESTED, OR GREEN LAPWING. GREEN PLOVER.

LAPWING SANDPIPER. PEWIT. TEWIT. TEACHET.

PEESE-WEEP. FRENCH PIGEON.

FIGURE 83.



ANELLUS cristatus is the scientific name of this beautiful bird; the first term may perhaps come from *vannus*—a fan, and be given to it on account of the graceful fan-like motion of its glossy green pinions, as it skims along the shore, or over the wide heaths, or low lying marshes, which it most frequents; the specific name means crested, and has reference to the crest of long black feathers which adorn the head, and can be raised nearly straight up or depressed at pleasure. We have called this a beautiful bird, and truly so it is, with bronzy green and coppery reflections playing over its black back, breast, throat, wings, top of the head, and end of the tail; the breast, back, and sides of the neck are pure white, as is part of the tail, and a long patch on each side of the head; the legs, belly, and under side of the tail, are all bright orange colour; and then its long shining crest gives it such a pert and comical air, that it is quite a pleasure to behold.

Lapwings, or Peewits, as they are more generally called, from their shrill cry, which sounds like the

syllables *pe-wit*, or *pees-wit*, are tolerably familiar birds with us, being found in summer on most wet heaths, moors, and marshy pastures. It nestles in April, and lays its four eggs, which, in general, are of a dull green colour, blotted and irregularly marked with brownish black, in April. A slight depression in the ground, with perhaps a few straws for lining, suffices for a nest; it is sometimes placed amid a tuft of rushes or long grass. Being considered delicate food they are eagerly sought for, and great numbers are every year taken and exposed for sale in the poulterers' shops in London and elsewhere.

The Lapwing feeds on worms and insects, runs with great speed, and has a quick flight, although the flapping of its wings is heavier and more measured than that of the Plovers.



TURNSTONE.

COMMON, OR COLLARED TURNSTONE. HEBRIDAL
SANDPIPER.

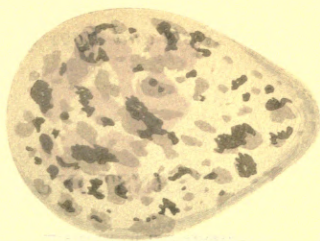
FIGURE 84.



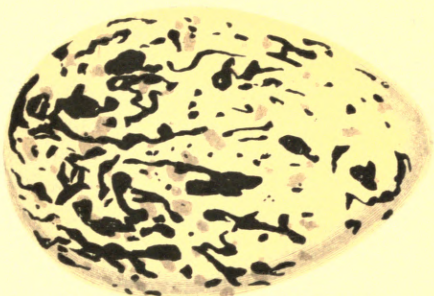
THIS is a very remarkable bird with regard to personal appearance, having a variegated dress of black, white, and brownish red, with little fading or running off into the other, so that the colours are strongly contrasted; it has a tolerably heavy body, a strong stout bill of moderate length, and longish thick legs, which are of a dull orange colour, the toes terminating in strong black claws, very useful in what appears to be the chief occupation of the bird, namely, turning up the stones and pieces of rock on the shore, in search of the sea-worms and small shell-fish which lurk beneath; farther inland it searches in the same way for beetles and other insects; hence its common name Turnstone, and Collared Turnstone, from the distinct white mark which passes over the neck and down each side of the breast, until it nearly meets beneath. In the Hebrides we find that it is called a Sandpiper, because it closely resembles, in habits and general conformation, some of the birds which belong to the *Tringa*, or Sandpiper genus, of which there are several species in this country.

The most commonly used scientific name of the

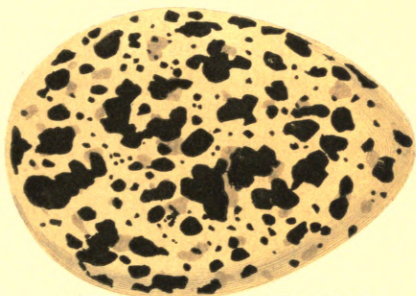
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Turnstone is *Strepsilas interpres*—rather a difficult name to translate. The first term appears to come from two Greek roots, *Strepho*—to turn, and *laas*—a stone; the second term may mean an interpreter, and is applied to the bird, as Morris conjectures, from its habit of careful investigation, and turning over, as a translator does the leaves of a book. So we may set down our feathered friend, who goes poking and prying into holes and turning up stones, as one who likes to see the bottom of things. It is well for my readers to have the like inclination, to possess an inquiring mind, so that they pursue their investigations with a due regard to the wishes and interests of others, and are not merely curious and Paul Pryish, if we may use the term. The secrets of nature cannot be too closely and perseveringly investigated, and in her domains much information may often be gained by becoming a Turnstone.

This bird is one of our winter visitants, arriving, says Morris, at the end of August; the Scottish naturalist, Macgillivray, we see, says, “visiting our coasts at the end of October.” Perhaps he refers more particularly to Scotland and the northern parts of the island; both agree in assigning May as the latest date of departure.

The Turnstones frequent rocky and gravelly places more than the smooth level sands. They are active energetic birds, running swiftly, and flying rapidly with regular well-timed beats of the wings, sometimes in a direct course, but oftener in curves. They have a clear twittering or whistling cry, uttered frequently

while flying. Their time of breeding is about the middle of June, when they are found on the coast of Norway and other northern countries of Europe. They lay their eggs on the sandy and rocky shores, sometimes amid the stunted herbage, but often in a slight hollow, natural or scraped out for the purpose, and lined with a few blades of grass. The eggs are four in number, of a reddish olive cast, spotted with dark grey, greenish brown, and black, some very thickly, others not so much so. They are smaller than the eggs of the Peewit, and more rounded in shape. Hewitson has remarked that those which he met with in Norway had a beautiful purple or crimson tinge.



OYSTER-CATCHER.

PIED OYSTER-CATCHER. SEA-PIE, OR PIET. PIANET.
CHOLDRICK. OLIVE.

FIGURES 85 AND 86.



HIS is another queer-looking customer, that one would scarcely like to call either handsome or ugly. A stout body, a short thick neck, a long strong bill, and slenderish legs of considerable length, as befits a wading bird, of a dingy orange colour, very large feet, with black toes. The bill is of a dull yellow, and the plumage throughout of two colours only, black and white, hence the term 'pied' applied to the bird, which bears the very pretty scientific name *Hæmatopus ostralegus*, which we shall take the liberty of dissecting to get at its meaning. *Aima* is Greek for blood, as *pous* is for foot; hence comes the Latin word *Hæmatopus*—a Red-shank; *ostrea* is the Latin for oyster, and *lego* in the same language means to collect; so our readers may put this and that together, and they will know as much about the matter as we do.

The Oyster-catcher, so called from its feeding on oysters and other shell-fish, is a constant resident on nearly all our coasts, in many parts of which it is said to be abundant. It makes its nest in a hollow among the gravel or shingles, and sometimes lines it with a little dry grass, or fragments of marine plants, but more

frequently a mixture of broken shells, in the arrangement of which considerable care appears to be taken, the bird sometimes making two or three nests before it completes one to its perfect satisfaction. The eggs are generally four in number, of a yellow stone-colour, spotted with grey and dark brown; sometimes the markings are drawn out long, more like scratches, or the scrawlings of a bad penman. Considerable varieties occur in the ground colour, some having been found of a very light greyish yellow, others of a deep reddish brown, and nearly all intermediate tints. The situations of the nests, too, occasionally vary, some, according to Morris, having been met with on isolated rocks at a height of ten or fifteen feet from the ground. The time of incubation is three weeks.

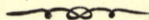


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